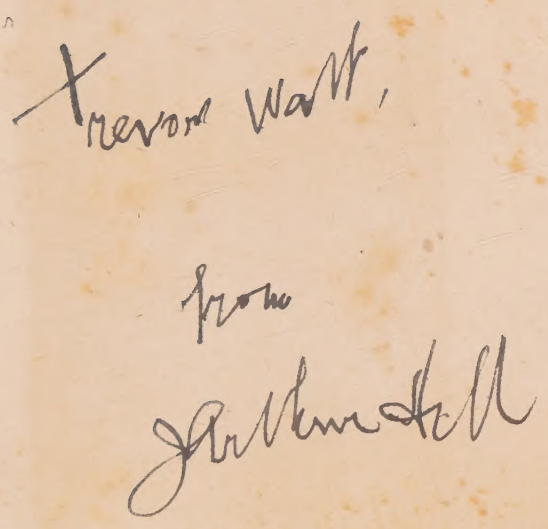
SPIRITUALISM

ITS HISTORY PHENOMENA AND DOCTRINE

J. ARTHUR HILL



SPIRITUALISM

Digitized by the Internet Archive
in 2024

https://archive.org/details/spiritualismitsh0000jart

SPIRITUALISM

Its History, Phenomena and Doctrine

BY

J. ARTHUR HILL

Author of "Psychical Investigations,"
"Man is a Spirit," etc.

With an Introduction by
SIR ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE

CASSELL AND COMPANY, LTD
London, New York, Toronto and Melbourne
1918

BF
1261
.H6
1918

CANISIUS COLLEGE LIBRARY

PREFACE

THIS book has been written in response to a suggestion from Messrs. Cassell & Company, Limited, that I should prepare a volume giving a comprehensive answer to the question: "What is Spiritualism?" A large literature of the subject exists, the library of the London Spiritualist Alliance containing about 3,000 volumes; but the aspects are many, the ramifications extensive, and there is no single work that presents a review of the whole, except Mr. Podmore's "Modern Spiritualism" (2 vols., 1902), which, besides being too bulky for any but a determined student, is now regarded by most investigators as being too negative. The progress of psychical research in the last sixteen years has raised into new credibility many narratives which, in those earlier days, a cautious mind could not even provisionally accept.

Here it is necessary or desirable that I should indicate my own position, in order that the reader may know how to discount my opinions. In debatable matters, we naturally want to know exactly where a writer stands, before we can decide how far to rely on what he says; for, though he may be perfectly honest, he may involuntarily be very unfair if he happens to have strong preferences.

I was never a materialist, for I happened to read Berkeley at an unusually early age; but I was unable to believe in an angry God who would punish for ever—not

for wicked acts towards one's fellow-creatures, but for holding incorrect theological opinions during our short span of a few years—and consequently our saintly old minister did the opposite of what he intended; instead of making me a Christian according to his definition, he made me a Huxleyan.

A rather close reading of evolutionary literature, plus some years of laboratory work which taught me scientific method, plus a fair amount of philosophy-browsing and a careful reading of Carlyle, Emerson, Tennyson, etc.—I had not then grown up to Browning—landed me safely in the "reverent agnosticism" which was to be expected; and there I stayed, with perhaps a slight tendency away from the fighting temper of Huxley towards the milder mood of Emerson, until I was over thirty. Then I became acquainted with a certain medium whose queer powers puzzled me. Previously I had, of course, scoffed at the whole thing, even when intimate friends of mine described their own inexplicable experiences. But I was soon compelled to admit that there was "something in it." I began to read spiritualistic literature, but it did not impress me. The writers were mostly unknown, their experiments were not described with sufficient fullness or exactness, and they often seemed ready to believe anything. Then I joined the Society for Psychical Research, and found what I wanted. Here was real evidence, set out in detail by men like Sir William Crookes, Sir Oliver Lodge, Professor Sidgwick, and others, whose work I knew and could rely on in other departments. I read all the S.P.R. publications, and was greatly impressed; in fact, convinced so far as the logic of the thing went—i.e., I felt that the evidence was sufficient to justify belief in the happenings and even in a spiritistic

explanation of some of them. But personal experience is necessary before real conviction of new truth can be attained, when one has remained in ignorance until over thirty; so I set myself to investigation. I sat with many mediums, professional and private, and the result was that I was gradually driven to admit that phenomena certainly happen which orthodox science does not explain or even recognise, that some of them may be due to not understood subliminal activities of living people, or to still more unknown causes, but that some others point to the agency of discarnate human beings.

I described some of these experiences in my book, "Psychical Investigations" (Cassell & Co.), and in earlier volumes; but the printed records are incomplete, much evidential private matter having had to be excluded because it involved other living people who would object to publicity. If we investigators could publish everything, our case would be much stronger.

In short, then, I believe that the survival of human beings past death, and the possibility of occasional communication, is a legitimate inference from the facts. I do not believe that communication is as free or as frequent as most spiritualists seem to think. I am not convinced that the regular trance-controls are spirits at all; they may be parts of the medium's subliminal, acting as channels for communications from beyond. And there are some phases of mediumship—*apports,* for instance—which I have never witnessed, the phenomena being rare. As to such unwitnessed things, my attitude is one of suspense of judgment. I neither believe nor disbelieve. Those who have had convincing experiences in these departments may think that I dismiss them too lightly. I can only ask their

indulgence. I must see and hear for myself, before I can really believe. I have tried to obtain as much personal experience as possible, but opportunities in some directions have been lacking.

The foregoing necessarily egoistic account may enable the reader to discount my statements in such way as he may think fit. Perhaps I had better add that on the emotional side I have little or no desire for personal survival, having been accustomed for many years (in consequence of early hell-teaching) to hope that it was not a fact; for, though not accepting that terrible doctrine, my mind was inevitably influenced more or less by exposure to such insistent dogmatism in my defenceless childhood, and obviously annihilation was preferable to hell. Later, perceiving that the material universe seems essentially indestructible, I inclined to a similar conservation of spirit though not a continuance of present personalities. The body ceases to exist though its elements continue but are redistributed, and the soul may similarly disintegrate into lower compounds or psychic elements. But the evidence told against that theory and in favour of greater integration and advance.

So far, then, as introspection goes, I seem to myself to be an impartial witness. Mr. G. B. Shaw, however, says that in debatable questions it is best not to listen to the fool who imagines himself impartial, but to have the case argued out with reckless bias on both sides. Well, those who wish to read the reckless arguings of both sides will be able to do so by obtaining the various books mentioned in the following pages, and the opinions of the fool who quotes them may be disregarded.

In this matter of books quoted, my indebtedness is

obvious and inevitable. I have endeavoured, indeed, to supply not only an outline of the whole subject, but also to indicate, by quotations and references, how that outline may be filled in by readers who find themselves sufficiently interested. In furnishing this guidance, which would have been useful to me at the beginning of my own studies, I must ask the indulgence of the many readers who —being already familiar with the literature—will not need it.

One book there is, and one man's work, which I have perhaps not made adequately prominent, though quoting it in places. Emerson says somewhere: "Of Plato I hesitate to speak, lest there should be no end"; and the psychical researcher feels somewhat thus about F. W. H. Myers. Without him, the S.P.R. would never have been what it is, many active investigators would never have taken up the subject, and many books would never have been written. Our debt to him is quite beyond computation. Let the earnest student read his great work, "Human Personality and Its Survival of Bodily Death," preferably in the unabridged two-volume edition, and he will find incomparably the most systematic and extensive presentation of psychical research up to the year 1901, when Myers died. It embodies the results of the investigation and reflection of a man of first-rate ability, who gave his life to pioneering in scientifically unsurveyed regions, well knowing that he thereby sacrificed place and fame during his lifetime. And, in addition to its systematic scientific presentment, it is a literary masterpiece of the first order. It has been well said that Myers's prose is equal to Ruskin's at its best; it was not surpassed, in its kind, by any writer of his century.

If, then, I seem to have said too little in the text about the leader to whom we owe so much, it is because anything I could say would be so hopelessly inadequate. Students must read him for themselves, and they will understand.

Chapter X. of Part I. appeared as an article, in slightly different form, in the *Occult Review* for August, 1917, and Chapter VI. of Part II. appeared in the *Hibbert Journal* for October, 1916. The remainder of the volume is new.

J. A. H.

September 20th, 1918.

CONTENTS

PAGE

INTRODUCTION BY SIR A. CONAN DOYLE . . xvii

PART I

HISTORICAL AND EVIDENTIAL

CHAPTER

1. ANTECEDENTS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

Fundamental conception of Survival and Communication not new —Communion of Saints—Rise of Science and Critical method —Moral revolt against Hell—Disbelief in Survival resulted from these two causes—Spiritualism restored Belief, on basis of facts, as in Early Christianity—Providential wisdom shown in delay of Psychical Science until after establishment of Physical Science —Biblical Spiritualism—Greek Oracles—Plutarch—Virgil, Æneas' Vision, Dido's Dream—Pliny—Neo-Platonism—Chinese Spiritualism—Jews and Teraphim—Nuns of Cevennes—St. Médard—Irvingites 3

2. SWEDENBORG

Birth (1688) and Education—Assessor—Scientific genius—Illumination in 1743—"Arcana Cœlestia"—The Stockholm fire—The Herteville case of Hidden Receipt—Kant's opinion—Swedenborg's sanity—Details about Next State—Recognition by friends —Continuity of character—Children grow up—Heavens and Hells—Houses, cities—All Angels first human beings—Swedenborg to be regarded as Prophet but not infallible . . . 17

3. CONFLUENCE OF SWEDENBORGIANISM AND MESMERISM IN AMERICA

Swedenborg not unique—Other Trance-seers—Mesmer's patients—Jung-Stilling—Mesmerism in New England—Crank communities —O. W. Holmes—Emerson—A. J. Davis—Clairvoyance—His first book, 1847—Teaching—Spheres—Hudson Tuttle's doctrine as to the Spheres—Professor Hare, Epes Sargent, Judge Edmunds 30

CHAPTER PAGE

4. The Hydesville Knockings

Fox family of Hydesville—Raps, 1848—Supposed murder, not well evidenced—Controversy concerning the raps—the Buffalo doctors—No certainty now attainable—Dr. Phelps's Poltergeist—A. J. Davis's opinion—Judge Edmunds's 40

5. Early Days in England

Mrs. Hayden and Mrs. Roberts—D. D. Home—Browning's suggestion of fraud unfounded—Mrs. Lyon—Notable sitters with Home—His travels—Sir William Crookes's investigations—Automatic Writing and Drawing by the Howitts and others—Angel Gabriel—But good done in spite of extravagances—Secularists converted—*Spiritual Telegraph* at Keighley—Davenport Brothers—Mrs. Everitt—The Dialectical Society's Report—David Duguid—Eglinton—Evidence for Materialisation inconclusive 44

6. William Stainton Moses

Birth (1839) and Education—Curacies—Mastership at University College School—Death in 1892—His phenomena—Serjeant Cox's description of incidents—The Speer sittings—Musician-spirits—Imperator—Main aim the broadening of Mr. Moses' theology—Evidential details—Steam-roller—Blanche Abercromby—Abraham Florentine—Testimony to Mr. Moses' high character—His books 60

7. The Society for Psychical Research

Founding by Cox of "Psychological Society," 1875—Dissolved in 1879—S. P. R. founded, 1882—Objects—Methods—No creed—Critics—Mrs. Piper—Integrity—Phinuit *régime*—George Pelham—"Imperator" band—Classical matter unknown to the medium—Manner of the trance—Now ceased—Other mediums, non-professional—Mrs. Thompson—Reports by Dr. van Eeden and Mrs. Verrall—Cross-correspondences—Classical allusions in scripts of non-classical Automatists—General mind-stuff theory—Sir Oliver Lodge's "Raymond"—Sir William Barrett's "On the Threshold of the Unseen" 70

8. Physical Phenomena

Line rather arbitrary, but Physical Phenomena mostly meaning demonstrably Supernormal movement or Behaviour of Matter—The Wesley haunt—Worksop and Cheriton Poltergeists—

CHAPTER PAGE

—Eusapia Palladino—Raps—Dr. Joseph Maxwell—Dr. Crawford and the Goligher circle—Direct Voice: Admiral Usborne Moore's investigations—Spirit Photography 94

9. Confirmatory Phenomena in India

Wide distribution of phenomena—Jacolliot's book—Vase-movements—Raps—Table made heavy—Harmoniflute playing untouched—Materialisation—Identity-evidence—Jacolliot's Sceptical attitude—The Brahmanic scheme very like that of A. J. Davis. 109

10. Ghosts

Facts in nature, though exceptional ones, like globular lightning—Definition—"Hallucination"—"Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. x. —"Phantasms of the Living"—Mr. Walker-Anderson's case —Projection of Phantasm by Mr. S. H. Beard—Possible subjectivity—Local Ghosts—Lytton and *eidola*, ghost being only a partial manifestation of the total self—"Induced" Ghost seeing—Normal Clairvoyance—Illustrations of Mr. Wilkinson's mediumship—Evidence that deceased people come to meet their dying friends 116

11. On Evidence, Proof and Belief

Survival accepted even by sceptical wing of S. P. R.—Mrs. Sidgwick —Difference between Psychical Researchers and Spiritualists—Subliminal Memory—Coleridge's story of the polyglossal servant-girl—Hypnotic experiments—Multiple personality—Blanche Poynings—But evidence goes beyond Subliminal Memory—Nature of Trance-Controls—Standards of proof—Critic's low standard—Must be cumulative—Coercive proof not possible—Psychology of belief—Personal history in reaching conviction . 126

PART II

RELIGIOUS ASPECT AND CRITICISMS

1. Spiritualism as a Religion

Cause of Spiritualistic Secession from other sects—Not antagonistic to any except those holding crude beliefs mainly as to Eschatology—Seven Principles of Spiritualism—More Christian than some modern forms of Christianity—Organisation—Number of Societies—Democratic, as Christianity was at first—Specimen service, with Clairvoyance—Sunday Schools or Lyceums—Their methods 143

CHAPTER PAGE

2. SPIRITUALISM AS A RELIGION (*continued*)

Internal friction and fission in Societies—Lack of Reverence in services—Longwindedness of speakers—Some "mediums" not mediumistic but only cases of Multiple Personality—Necessity of evidence of Supernormality—Private circles—Questionably good—Dark sittings—But notwithstanding crudities, Spiritualists have the root of the matter—They have forced the facts into prominence—Spiritualism in America, France, Italy, Germany, Spain, South America, Russia, Australia, New Zealand—Agitation at home for repeal of Witchcraft Laws—Case for and against 171

3. MATERIALISTIC AND OTHER OBJECTIONS

A priori negations—The things do not happen—Professor Münsterberg, Mr. Frederic Harrison, Tyndall—Huxley's wiser attitude—Mr. Edward Clodd—Sir E. Ray Lankester—No experimental demonstration of Volcanic eruptions, Earthquakes, or even Thunderstorms possible 180

4. ROMAN CATHOLIC AND MYSTICAL OBJECTIONS

The things happen, but are the work of Devils—Lord Alfred Douglas—Prohibition wise for many people—But conservatism may be overdone—High moral teaching—Father Bernard Vaughan—Mystical objections—Some force in them, and valid for some people—But Reason is a Divine gift, as well as Intuition—Civilisation a good thing—But each must decide for himself—All extremes to be avoided, but no directions banned . . . 191

5. SOME PROTESTANT OBJECTIONS

Misunderstanding that spirits can be "called up"—*The Christian* and *Joyful News*—Allegations of insanity caused—Probably more insanity caused by Hell-belief—Specific answers to the charge—"Triviality" of Messages—But small things are often the best evidence—And A. J. Davis wrote thirty volumes of serious matter, non-evidential—Leviticus—But do its quoters observe its other prohibitions as well?—Bishop of Oxford—A weighty objection—Belief in Survival more wholesomely based on faith in God than on phenomena—But the Early Christians based their belief on Phenomena (Christ's Resurrection)—And for many people a Phenomena-based Belief seems the only way back to Religion 200

CHAPTER PAGE

6. FECHNER'S THEORY OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

The World-Soul—Human Personality perhaps a part of it—Inorganic Matter not unconscious—Saturated with Mind—But Selves do not merge after bodily Death—Individuality continues to grow—The post-mortem Body—Material results of Earth-Actions and Thoughts—Rapport-objects—Links up with Myers's Subliminal—Recognition after Death—Deeper sleep, wider memory, till Death restores all, forgotten things having preceded us—Scientific nature of Fechner's system . . . 212

7. SPIRITUALISTIC CONCEPTIONS OF AFTER-DEATH CONDITIONS

Swedenborgian in asserting Similarity to Earth-life, but more optimistic—Universal Salvation—Spheres—Jews and Plurality of Heavens—Paul's "Third Heaven"—Summerland—Tuttle, McKenzie, Wilson—The Theosophical scheme—A compromise scheme suggested, including elements of Origen and Fechner—Best Spiritualistic opinion wisely restrained as to Definite Spheres—Stead's "After Death"—Excessive Mourning wrong—Love the chief thing—Experiences at Death—Stainton Moses' information from spirit about conditions over there—Reality of the life 228

8. CONCLUSION

Summing up—Belief in Survival became moribund in nineteenth century—Spiritualism revived it by finding and emphasising same sort of Phenomena as those on which Christianity was based—Swedenborg had prepared the way—S. P. R. work—But Spiritualism is more than belief in Survival and Communication; it is a Religion—Includes Fatherhood of God and Brotherhood of Man—Is nearer the Christianity of the first three centuries than is the Christian Orthodoxy of to-day—Opposition based mainly on ignorance—Nature of future life—Spiritualistic opinion regarding Christ—The seven articles repeated . . 244

GLOSSARY 261

INDEX 265

INTRODUCTION

If I were asked to recommend a course of reading for an intelligent agnostic who knew nothing about psychic science, I should be inclined to begin it by choosing the five successive books in which Mr. J. Arthur Hill has exhibited the unfolding of his own mind. Such reading has the advantage that the inquiring agnostic and Mr. Hill start at scratch together. Mr. Hill's unhappy experience of this world had by no means predisposed him towards any desire for a continuance of existence beyond the grave, and his critical tendency of thought had led him to negative rather than positive results. Yet his attention had been arrested by the growing and persistent claims of the survivalists, and he felt an intellectual compulsion to examine the question, whatever his own prepossessions might be. The first results are to be seen in "Religion and Modern Psychology," where his active mind reaches out into the vague but fascinating country before it. In another book of the same year, "New Evidences in Psychical Research," you see these exploring tentacles taking their grip on this or that which seemed solid, and tugging at it to see if it would indeed stand a strain. In the third, "Psychical Investigations," the solid points are numerous and stronger. He can tug as he will and he cannot shake them. His fourth book, "Man is a Spirit," is indirect, dealing less with his own experiences and more with those of others, but all bearing upon the same thesis. And now in this, the last of the

series, he goes over the whole ground, shows the gradual development from small things to greater which marks all true progress, and tells how orthodox science, with a few brilliant exceptions, broke every rule of science when faced with an entirely new proposition, while orthodox religion, with the same reservation, failed to recognise the true root of religion from which it had itself grown in the far-off days when it was green and full of life. This is the subject of Mr. Hill's present book, and no more vital one could possibly engage his pen.

We must admit that the phenomena which first in modern times gave rise to this line of thought and investigation, were insignificant in their nature and squalid in their environment. They were trivial, inconsequential, absurd, lending themselves readily to imitative fraud upon one side and to practical joking upon the other, while the credulity of many believers sustained the incredulity of their opponents. But thoughtful men from the beginning saw that there was more behind the movement than could possibly be laughed or explained away. The fact that phenomena were simulated, and rascals were convicted in the police courts as the impostors that they were, did not really touch the heart of the question. Such incidents might prevent superficial or prejudiced thinkers from going farther, and give them some excuse for their mental inertia; but an investigator who devoted even a little earnest attention to the matter was bound to admit that, making every allowance for fraud, there was a great residuum which could not possibly be explained in such a way. Thus, those who came to scoff remained continually to pray. So it was with Professor Hare, of Philadelphia, in the earliest days. So also with the Dialectical Society

of London, who were hostile, or at the best neutral, at the outset, and yet presented a unanimous report endorsing the physical phenomena. So also with Dr. A. Russel Wallace, General Drayson, and many other investigators, who began, as Mr. Arthur Hill did, and, if I may say so, as I myself have done, with a marked bias against the whole idea of survival. In spite of the doubts of the scientific world and the anathema of the creedbound churches, there always remained, however, a considerable body of simple, earnest folk who took things at their face value, were content to admit the existence of fraud if they were convinced that the basis was truth, and continued in this belief in spite of all criticism. Time has justified them. What their own intuitions endorsed has been vindicated by a more enlightened science. Here, as once before, the humble folk were right, and "the wisdom of this world was as foolishness before God."

All civilised nations have contributed to the sinking of these foundations. It is a pure chance that Hydesville was the seat of the original phenomena which caught the public attention, for very similar ones broke out within a year or two at Cideville in France, and there had been many outbreaks of the same sort in England, the most typical being that in John Wesley's house at Epworth. What marked an epoch in America was when the young Fox girl, clapping her hands, challenged the unseen presence to do the same. Its instant response introduced the idea of intelligence into what had previously been a mere chaos of noises and movements. The American mind is open to new impressions, and probably the cult spread more rapidly there than it could have done elsewhere. But the biggest brain which turned itself upon this new subject

and drew others behind it, was not American but French. Allan Kardec, with his spiritist philosophy, differed in some details from the Americans, but founded his conclusions upon the same phenomena. When the whole story comes to be told, however, there is no doubt that it is to England that the new branch of science owes most, and, indeed, that it is due to England that it can be called a science at all. Cambridge University will always be the Mecca of systematic psychic investigation, which is the avenue that so often leads eventually to complete acceptance of the spiritual hypothesis. There have seldom, if ever, been a more brilliant set of minds than those which engaged themselves upon this subject. Frederic Myers and Gurney, Oliver Lodge and Hodgson, Sidgwick, Butcher, Roden Noel, the two Verralls, Gerald Balfour, Andrew Lang, William Barrett; these are some of the keen intellects, not all of Cambridge, but all forming a circle round the Cambridge nucleus. From this circle was born the Society for Psychical Research, and from this again such a mass of evidence as has seldom been gathered upon any one subject before. An American Psychical Research Society is doing good work upon the English model; but it is always in the latter and in the great work of Frederic Myers that psychic science will find its firmest root. People call aloud for evidence who have been too indolent to examine the evidence already in existence; but anyone who reads even a portion of the voluminous reports of the Society, should find as much as the most exacting mind could require.

Some small compendium of the evidence such as is presented in this volume is the more needful as the general Press is so exceedingly ignorant upon the point. The

result is that it always approaches each fresh manifestation *de novo*, as if no such thing had ever been heard of before. For example, Sir Oliver Lodge's "Raymond" has been continually reviewed as if this were some new opinion which he had put forward, instead of being a restatement in his own case of what had already been urged by a thousand before him. The same holds good of particular phenomena. Each new outbreak is criticised with no reference to the last, and no admission of the cumulative weight which successive instances must afford. If, for example, an okapi had only once been shot in Africa, its existence on the evidence of a single sportsman might reasonably be doubted. If ten men agreed that they had shot such a creature, the evidence would be strong. If fifty had done so, it would become convincing. This is common sense. Thus it is with such a phenomenon as a noisy poltergeist, two cases of which are at the present moment under my own observation. Each case, like the recent one at Cheriton, is treated in the Press as an isolated phenomenon. A wider knowledge of the subject would teach the critic that there are very many upon record, some of them most carefully observed, and that all of them agree in certain general characteristics. Thus, as in the case of the okapi, numbers give assurance, and it is not possible to treat as a delusion that for which there are so many witnesses. The overpowering strength of the case for survival is not appreciated because the evidence has not been in a sufficiently readable and condensed form. Such works as this, or as Sir William Barrett's excellent "Threshold of the Unseen," help to supply the want.

I have alluded, in an earlier paragraph of these notes, to Mr. Arthur Hill's unhappy experience of this life. On

a recent visit to Bradford I had an opportunity of calling upon him, and of realising his remarkable personality and the extraordinary conditions under which he produces his work. A strong and athletic young man, he was suddenly reduced to absolute helplessness by a heart-wrench sustained while cycling up a hill, and has now spent many years stretched upon his back in bed with such physical disabilities that he cannot even write as most invalids would write, but has to hold the paper up at an angle with one hand while he writes with the other. That, in these circumstances, he has carried out the course of reading which his tasks necessitate, has done so much laborious investigation, himself taking verbatim shorthand notes, and has been able within a few years to write considerable books, besides being the protagonist in many arguments and correspondences in the Press, is a most remarkable example of human perseverance and adaptability. To those who, like myself, take the gravest possible view of this movement, and regard it as being a fresh departure in religious thought and experience such as we have not had for two thousand years, it seems more than chance that a man who had such qualifications for the work, but who was engrossed in other things, should have had all else rent so violently from him with the result of concentrating him entirely upon the all-important task. If these few lines of mine are of any use to him, or to the cause which he represents, I shall be proud to think that I have been of assistance.

ARTHUR CONAN DOYLE.

April 26, 1918.

PART I

HISTORICAL AND EVIDENTIAL

SPIRITUALISM

CHAPTER I

ANTECEDENTS OF MODERN SPIRITUALISM

THE fundamental principle of spiritualism is that human beings survive bodily death, and that occasionally, under conditions not yet fully understood, we can communicate with those who have gone before. This belief is not new, but it has been obscured, and needs to be re-emphasised if it is true. Religion, in the West at least, has always included the doctrine of personal survival, and has been friendly or tolerant towards communication of a sort—e.g., prayers to saints and help from them, and the popular belief in angels, ghosts, and what not; but, latterly in particular, official Religion has not put any after-death teaching in the forefront of its scheme.

This is comprehensible enough, for the orthodox scheme had become incredible. From the intellectual side, science had undermined it at two places: first, by its establishment of continuity and gradation in nature, suggesting similar continuity and gradation in super-nature, instead of a sudden jump to everlasting bliss or a sudden plunge to everlasting woe; second, by its application—in that determined truth-search which is itself religious—of higher standards of evidence, more rigorous tests, to historical records. And the result of this latter process was, that the miraculous element in the Bible, not being supported by

things generally observed to happen now, fell into discredit. Even the oldest Gospel was not written until many years after the events described, and we have none of the originals, our oldest MSS. dating from several centuries later. Consequently, according to modern standards, the evidence for Christ's appearances after His death—and if Christ be not risen, then is Christian faith vain—was seen to be far from coercive. Indeed, some writers denied even the "historicity" of Jesus; though this school can hardly be said to have included any first-class name. But doubt as to the reality of the after-death appearances and other miracles became widespread.

On the moral side also, the orthodox scheme was discredited. The idea of an endless hell of unspeakable torment as punishment for the sins of a few years, or even for erroneous theological opinions, began to shock the developed moral sense. It was not just. Still less was it reconcilable with belief in a loving Father. Attempts were made to excuse God by saying that He had given free will to man, and that the latter could be "saved" if he liked; but (1) if God gave man free will, He is ultimately responsible, for He need not have given it; (2) a man cannot believe "if he likes"; belief is not entirely under the control of the will—it is a state of mind resulting from the interplay of mind with its surroundings. In order, then, to retain a God who can be loved and worshipped, without the rather comic expedient of limiting His power or His goodness, the modern mind abandons everlasting punishment.

Thus the march of events brought forces to bear from the sides of both intellect and morals against orthodox after-life creeds. The Churches accordingly began to leave the question alone and to concern themselves with

other matters, in which they have done useful work. They provide good sermons, helpful on the moral side and often spiritually stimulating; they also provide music, and serve as foci for many activities which are socially beneficial. But the loss of definite belief in personal survival has weakened the Churches' appeal. Lest a layman's opinion be disallowed, hear what a preacher and Principal of a theological college has to say on this point:

> Among the reasons for the decay of the influence of the Christian pulpit during the past generation, one is undoubtedly the fact that the doctrine of immortality has so largely lost its place at the heart of the Christian message. Preachers nowadays do not concern themselves so much with what happens after death as with what happens to us here and now. The pains of Hell, the bliss of Heaven, the penalties and rewards which await us in the unseen have largely disappeared from amongst the incentives and warnings of the religious life, nor have any others taken their place. Life is dealt with as though it found its sanctions, rewards, and punishments within the circle of our earthly experiences, and needed no future life to round off its incompleteness, and bring its tremendous issues to fruition.[1]

And as to the belief in general, as distinguished from the beliefs of preachers, the same writer says:

> I am not sure, indeed, that it would be wrong to say that it can now be best described as a vague hope rather than as a confident faith of moral urgency and spiritual stimulus. . . .[2] The thought of another existence beyond the grave has receded from the foreground of consciousness in the case of religious people as well.[3]

[1] "Faith and Immortality," by Dr. E. Griffith-Jones. Preface, p. vii.

[2] *Ibid.*, p. 22.

[3] *Ibid.*, pp. 25-6. Hymns are sung about our future state, "asleep within the tomb"—waiting for a dubious resurrection, and we are exhorted to "work, for the night is coming." Not much healthy belief there.

Spiritualism, however, brought a true revival. It was found that things happened—actual facts amenable to scientific investigation—which required or at least justified a belief in the continued existence and agency of discarnate human beings. Communications seemed to come from them regarding their state, and these communications harmonised well with modern requirements. Naturally, therefore, these discoveries seemed to provide a basis something like the root facts of Christianity. Christ brought life and immortality to light by rising from the dead and appearing to and communicating with His followers. These first believers were honest men who had not been sophisticated to the extent of disbelieving the unusual; men who trusted their senses and believed their report as we do in ordinary affairs. So with the early spiritualists. They found facts which indicated survival. They brought life and immortality to light once more; not by one unique instance, but by multitudes of instances, though mostly not of the same order as that great early one. The modern phenomena are, for the most part, in a lower key than those of the Gospel records; but they amply confirm and justify the belief which was based on the events there described. These phenomena spiritualists make the basis of their philosophy and religion, as the early Christians did with *their* experiences.

It may seem strange that we have had to wait nearly nineteen hundred years for a recurrence of this kind of fact; or, rather, for adequate recognition of it—for it is probable that these things have always been happening more or less without receiving systematic attention. But there is no doubt a reason for it. Each age has its own function in the scheme of evolution, and it cannot attend to everything.

It is only in the fullness of time that each new advance is made. The Jews and the Greeks had to teach their lessons before we were ready for Bacon and the objective method. Then we had to have three hundred years of application of the method, to ground us well in physical science and the faith in nature's orderliness which it teaches, before we could be trusted to direct much attention to those difficult residual psychic phenomena which the early spiritualists discovered or re-discovered.[1] It may be worth while to remind ourselves that it was a re-discovery by glancing for a moment at the literature of earlier periods.

The Bible is naturally the first source that occurs to us. Almost all modern alleged psychical phenomena can be paralleled from the pages of Scripture. Says the Rev. H. R. Haweis:

> Take up your Bible and you will find that there is not a single phenomenon which is recorded there which does not occur at séances to-day. Whether it be lights, sounds, the shaking of the house, the coming through closed doors, the mighty rushing winds, levitation, automatic writing, the speaking in tongues, we are acquainted with all these phenomena; they occur every day in London as well as in the Acts of the Apostles. . . . It is incontestable that such things do occur, that in the main the phenomena of Spiritualism are reliable, and happen over and over again, under test conditions, in the presence of witnesses; and that similar phenomena are recorded in the Bible, which is written for our learning. It is not an opinion, not a theory, but a fact. There is chapter and verse for it, and this is what has rehabilitated the Bible. The clergy ought to be very grateful

[1] This point, that science did well to limit itself at first to the physical side, is emphasised in the presidential address of the Right Hon. A. J. Balfour to the S.P.R., "Proceedings," Vol. X., and in that of Professor Henri Bergson, Vol. XXVI.—translation in Vol. XXVII.

to Spiritualism for this, for they could not have done it themselves.[1]

Samuel referred to inspirational or even trance speaking when he said in his instructions to Saul: "The spirit of the Lord will come mightily upon thee, and thou shalt prophesy with them, and shalt be turned into another man" (1 Sam. x. 6)[2]; and we remember Samuel's clairvoyance regarding the strayed asses (ix. 3-20), also that Saul paid him a fee of a quarter of a shekel of silver, which might have led to Samuel's appearance in the police court if the thing had happened in 20th-century London. So with Balaam, who saw spirits and was a trance speaker. Abraham entertained angels, who were probably men, as indeed they are called (Gen. xviii. xix.); also the angel who appeared to Cornelius is called a young man (Acts x. 30) and the same with the angels at the sepulchre of Jesus (Luke xxiv. 4). Angel (angelos) means "messenger," without any necessary suggestion of non-humanity. Jacob wrestled with a man until daybreak (Gen. xxxii. 24-30). Jesus talked with Moses and Elias on the mountain-top, and the spirits were visible to Peter, John, and James also (Luke ix. 30-32). Saul of Tarsus saw a great light and heard the memorable voice (Acts ix.). Peter had visions both symbolic and directly informative (Acts xi. xii.) and was delivered from prison by an angel, who, again, was probably a human ghost, for when the delivered Peter came to the house of Mary, the mother of John, and the maid told those within who was at the gate, they would not believe, saying: "It is his angel" (Acts xii. 15). These

[1] Address, London Spiritualist Alliance. Wallis's "Spiritualism in the Bible," p. 8.

[2] Cf. "Be not anxious beforehand what ye shall speak: but whatsoever shall be given you in that hour, that speak ye: for it is not ye that speak, but the Holy Ghost." (Mark xiii. 11.)

are taken at random; it is unnecessary to labour the proof that the Bible contains spiritualistic experiences, whatever opinion we may hold of the credibility of this or that portion.

Turning to other books, we find many psychical happenings, though in the earlier ones they are more in the nature of premonitions and the like than of communications from departed human beings.[1] It is hardly worth while speculating on the reason for this, the accounts being so remote and so scanty. Some would perhaps surmise that man has not always been endowed with the potentiality of survival—that in his early days he had no soul or that at death it rejoined the general psychic mass from which future souls were carved out.[2] Be this as it may, many early records are of the kind given by Plutarch regarding Dion.

> While this conspiracy was afoot, a strange and dreadful apparition was seen by Dion. As he sat one evening in a gallery in his house, alone and thoughtful, hearing a sudden noise he turned about, and saw at the end of the colonnade, by clear daylight, a tall woman, in her countenance and garb like one of the tragical Furies, with a broom in her hand, sweeping the floor. Being amazed and extremely affrighted, he sent for some of his friends, and told them what he had seen, entreating them to stay with him and keep him company all night; for he was excessively discomposed and alarmed, fearing that if he were left alone the spectre would again appear to him. He saw it no more. But a few days after, his only son, being almost grown up to man's estate, upon some displeasure and pet he had taken upon a childish and frivolous occasion, threw himself headlong from the top of the house and broke his neck.[3]

[1] See F. W. H. Myers on Greek Oracles in "Classical Essays."

[2] Such "achieved" immortality is somewhat in line with the late Old Testament belief that only the righteous survived death.

[3] "Lives," iii., p. 368, Everyman Ed., Life of Dion.

In the *Æneid,* however, we come across several narratives of definitely spiritualistic character; and, though the *Æneid* is poetry and not history or science, it is not entirely fantastic poetry, and we may suppose that the spiritualistic stories were believed not only by people in general but by the poet himself. They are quite in line with modern experiences, and it is probable enough that Virgil had actual knowledge of well-authenticated accounts of such things happening in his own time and country. He describes Hector's appearing to Æneas and warning him to flee at once, for the foes are on the ramparts and Troy is tumbling from her topmost spire. This was in a dream; but, on obeying the order to flee, Æneas soon afterwards has a full-blown hallucination which is "evidential." Carrying his father on his shoulders, and leading the little boy Iulus, Æneas loses his wife Creusa in the haste and confusion of the flight; he turns back alone, calling her name in frenzy, and is met by her ghost, which tells him of her fate and of his own future.

As I was seeking her, and unceasingly raving through the houses of the city, the hapless phantom and shade of Creusa herself appeared to me before my eyes, and her form larger than I had known it.[1] I was amazed, and my hair stood up, and my voice clung to my throat. Then she thus

[1] This appearance of the phantom as larger than life may have some significance. The same thing is said in Plutarch's Life of Cæsar, of the phantom which appeared to Brutus—though it is not definitely stated that the ghost was Cæsar's or, indeed, human—and Mr. Edward Carpenter has said it of the form of his mother, which he saw regularly for some time after her death ("My Days and Dreams," p. 106). Also, it is a notable fact that at the sittings described in my book, "Psychical Investigations," the medium often described people as being bigger than they were in life, though I attributed it to comparison with his own stature. However, it is curious to find the same thing cropping up so frequently, and it fits in with the Theosophical idea of the astral body being larger than the physical one.

began to address me, and to remove my cares by these words: "What avails it to give way so far to frenzied grief, my sweet husband? These events happen not without the will of heaven, nor is it permitted you to convey hence Creusa as your partner. . . . And now farewell, and preserve your love for our common son."

Earlier in Book I. is the account of Dido's dream, in which her dead husband appears and tells her the details of his murder by Pygmalion. This reminds us of the Pot of Basil story, which Keats versified from Boccaccio's prose. Lorenzo, being enamoured of Isabella, was murdered by her brothers and buried in a wood; but he appeared to her in a dream and correctly told where to find his body.

"Isabel, my sweet!
Red whortleberries droop above my head,
And a large flint stone weighs upon my feet;
Around me beeches and high chestnuts shed
Their leaves and prickly nuts; a sheepfold bleat
Comes from beyond the river to my bed."

A similar case is described by Pliny the Younger, an acute and learned lawyer of the first century of our era. It did not come within his own experience, but the evidence impressed him, and we may assume that he had the story from people whom he considered trustworthy. It concerned an apparition which led the percipient to a certain part of a courtyard and then vanished. The place was marked, and afterwards dug up, when a human body was found. This being properly buried, the haunting (for it was a case of persistent appearance) ceased.[1]

There is a curious and rather humorous similar story

[1] For many references to classical phantoms, see "Greek and Roman Ghost Stories," by L. Collison Morley (London: Simpkin, Marshall and Company, Limited, 1912).

in an Egyptian Papyrus at Leyden, in which the writer of a letter "complains bitterly of the persistent annoyance caused to him by his deceased wife." ("L'époux se plaint des mauvais procédés de l'épouse défunte dont à ce qu'il paraît la mort ne l'a pas suffisamment débarassé": M. Chabas, Introduction to the Papyri of Leyden, p. 71.)[1] Perhaps she had a legitimate grievance, as had Dido, who threatened to haunt Æneas:—

"My shade shall be with you wherever you are."[2]

And it is clear that something almost startlingly like modern spiritualism was in existence in the first centuries of our era. Porphyry describes spirits as manifesting in many ways, often through an entranced "recipient"; and he says that if conditions were not good the spirit would himself warn his auditors that he would be unable to give information, or even that he would make incorrect statements. A small confined space was essential to good results, in order "that the influence should not be too widely diffused." There was singing and sometimes darkness, as in sittings nowadays for materialisation and the direct voice. In trance speech the spirit alludes to the medium in the third person, as "the mortal" or "the recipient"; and at some sittings the medium was bound with withes and enveloped in fine linen, perhaps in order to eliminate fraud. Certainly the spirits were believed to appear sometimes in visible and tangible form; and their precise nature had been in dispute since the days of Pythagoras, "who conjectured that the apparition was an

[1] "Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as Illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Egypt" (Hibbert Lectures), by P. Le Page Renouf, p. 154 (London: Williams and Norgate, 1884).

[2] "Æneid," bk. iv.

emanation from the spirit, but not, strictly speaking, the spirit itself," a conjecture supported by modern research. Unfortunately a good deal of our information concerning Neo-Platonic spiritualism comes through hostile Church Fathers such as Eusebius; but it is clear that they were unable to dismiss the phenomena as unreal.[1]

Similarly in Egyptian literature there is ample proof of belief in survival, and very full and curious accounts are given of the wanderings of the spirit after death. In China there is evidence of the same belief, with ancestor-worship and communication, for it was customary to tell the departed any news that might be interesting to them. There is less evidence of communication from the other world, but this has probably also been much practised, for trance addresses and the use of a sort of planchette are common among the Taoists; and a missionary friend of the present writer has attended Taoist services—by favour of his acquaintance with a Taoist priest for whom he has a high regard—and believes that the trance addresses do often contain supernormally-acquired knowledge. Whether the control purports to be a human being or some non-human intelligence, is not always clear.

A sort of ouija-system was in vogue in early Greece, for Ammianus Marcellinus tells of "some Greek cultivators of theurgy" who ascertained the future by suspending a ring by a fine linen thread, held apparently by the officiating person after due purification, over the characters of the alphabet set in a circle. The ring darted out to the letters required, and words were spelt out.[2] The people concerned

[1] Myers on Greek Oracles in "Classical Essays," pp. 83 and following.

[2] Howitt's "History of the Supernatural," vol. i., p. 366.

were prosecuted, no doubt as a heretical sect or from motives of fear, as in our own witchcraft persecutions of two or three hundred years ago. Similarly with some important personages in Rome who seem to have had séances for materialisation. They were subjected to police supervision. The majority naturally tend to tyrannise over the minority, and true discovery is often thus suppressed for the time; for each discoverer has a whole conservative world against him, which thinks it knows already that such things cannot be, or, if they can, that they ought not. This trait of human nature is probably a sufficient explanation of the smallness of the literary evidence for induced psychical phenomena. One cannot be blamed for seeing a ghost; it simply cannot be helped if the ghost thinks fit to appear; but it is different with séances. So the spiritualist of those early days would for the most part keep silence about his doings, as many find it best to do even now.

With reference to the point that the early communications in China, Greece, etc., seem to be from gods (e.g., in the oracles) rather than from human beings, it is to be noted that the terminology is not very exact. The Neo-Platonists believed in a graduated hierarchy of beings. Even Plutarch held this notion of many grades between God and man—it being absurd to suppose no mean between two such extremes—and he seems uncertain what to call these communicating spirits. He names them Genii or Daimons, but at the same time he speaks of them as "having first been men"; so it is possible enough that, in old accounts, communication from a "god" may mean communication from a human being who has passed on to the higher state. In old Jewish days the teraphim were ancestral images—though regarded as images of

Yahwe later[1]—and they were consulted as oracles (2 Kings xxiii. 24). Often where "god" is written, the spirit of an ancestor is meant, for the dead, when invoked, were termed elohim (1 Sam. xxviii. 13). Or, as in oracles giving clairvoyance rather than communications—e.g., the famous case of Crœsus, described by Herodotus—the supernormal faculty may have been exerted by the priestess's own subliminal self.

In these earlier cases, it is impossible to make out exactly what happened. For example, there was an epidemic of trance-speaking, convulsions, ecstasy, etc., among the Ursuline nuns of Loudun, in 1632-4, and the Mother Superior herself was affected, which indicates that it was not merely a case of a few hysterical girls. The controlling agencies confessed themselves to be devils, and a certain curé was burnt alive, as the bewitcher, in April, 1634. But the accounts are anonymous, and the writers were under the influence of theological bias, as were the sufferers.[2]

Similarly with the outbreak of inspirational phenomena among the peasantry of the Cevennes in 1707, the devotees of St. Médard in 1730 and onwards, and the automatic utterances of the Irvingites. In all these cases it was claimed that foreign languages were spoken by persons possessing no normal knowledge of them, and this was reckoned to be proof of diabolic or celestial agency. But the evidence does not prove that any recognised foreign language was spoken to an unaccountable extent, and it is probable that all these are cases of genuine auto-

[1] "Critical History of the Doctrine of a Future Life," by R. H. Charles, D.D. (A. and C. Black, 1899), p. 23.

[2] "La Véritable Histoire des Diables de Loudun," translated and edited by Edmund Goldsmid, London, 1887. "Histoire des Diables de Loudun," Amsterdam, 1693.

matism—a dreaming aloud, with the resources of subliminal memory available, and producing results sufficient to astonish a credulous public. Moreover, many of these "foreign languages" were probably not languages at all, but merely an assemblage of sounds, as in many trance mediums of a later date. As to the Irvingite "tongues," Robert Baxter first believed in their celestial origin, but finally thought them demoniac. He apparently overshot the truth in both directions; also in assuming the necessity of any superhuman agency at all.

Similarly again with Dr. Dee's crystal-gazing experiments with Kelly in the sixteenth century. Kelly was probably a fraud, for he was certainly a doubtful character; but in any case there seems to have been no claim that the spirits were those of human beings. They were said to be Gabriel, Uriel, and other angels, and they mostly made predictions, which did not always come true.

But it is unnecessary to labour the point by quoting further cases, which could be found in abundance in the "Lives of the Saints" and other literature, for it will no doubt be admitted that belief in survival of the human spirit, and even of communication therewith, particularly in dreams, is as old as the belief that there are human spirits at all.[1] Naturally the evidential quality of records of remote events is far below what we now require, and they cannot be held to prove the truth of the belief. But the fact of the belief existing, and the nature of the records, have a certain supporting value for our modern instances and theories.

[1] There is a large collection of data in Howitt's "History of the Supernatural."

CHAPTER II

SWEDENBORG

SUPERNORMAL experiences, then, had probably been common enough all along, but the times were not ripe for the systematic study of them. Occasionally a person of outstanding ability of one sort or another had had them—as Socrates with his guiding or restraining voice, and Joan of Arc—but the fact had only a so-to-speak local significance. The experiences did not fit into any scheme; they represented the incursion of another order, and were affairs of religion. Science did not exist. Then came Tasso, a great man, who held animated conversations with spirits, "with an earnestness and power which left no doubt of his own belief in the reality of his impressions"; but Tasso was a poet, and therefore might safely be considered more or less mad. Also the time was still a little early. It was required that a learned and scientific man should have such experiences, in an age becoming scientific. In due time the man came.

Emanuel Swedenborg was born in Stockholm on January 29th, 1688, was educated at Upsala, and travelled for four years in England, Holland, France, and Germany. During this period he made many inventions, notably "a sort of ship in which a man can go below the surface of the sea, and do great damage to the fleet of an enemy."[1]

[1] William White's "Life of Swedenborg," p. 29. He also invented a new stove, a magazine air-gun, methods of salt manufacture, and a sort of pianola; and drew plans for a flying-machine and the construction of docks ("Transactions of the International Swedenborg Congress, 1910," p. 5).

After his return he was appointed Assessor in the Swedish College of Mines. He wrote books on algebra, giving the first account in Swedish of the differential and integral calculus; on a mode of finding the longitude at sea by the moon; on decimal money and measures; on the motion and position of the earth and planets; on the depth of the sea, and greater force of the tides in the ancient world; on docks, sluices, and salt works; and on chemistry as atomic geometry. He was offered, in 1724, a professorship of mathematics, but declined from a dislike of non-practical science. For many years he then devoted himself to his work, and to the study of mining and smelting metallic ores, visiting Liége in order to study the rolling-methods employed there, and endeavouring to put the iron-mining of Sweden on a better basis. After some philosophical writing, dissatisfied with his results, he studied anatomy and physiology, and wrote books thereon. At the age of fifty-four, Swedenborg was probably one of the most learned men alive; taking "learning" as meaning acquaintance with the universe as then known. One small indication of this is the fact that the then President of our Royal Society (Sir Hans Sloane) invited him to become a corresponding member.

Then a curious thing happened. In 1743 he had a spiritual illumination, with tremblings, voices, lights, etc., and began to have access to the spiritual world, or to think he had. During the years 1749-56 he published in London his "Arcana Cœlestia," in eight volumes quarto, and, later, other works containing the exposition of his doctrines, which were mainly concerned with a spiritual interpretation of the Scriptures, and particularly of Genesis and Exodus. Much of this seems fanciful, but the thought is always systematic, and no one can reasonably say that

Swedenborg was insane. Moreover he was shrewd in worldly affairs, affable in society, and discussed politics and finance in the Swedish Diet like a man of the world for a score of years after he began to write and publish his theological works, which number about forty volumes.

But this exposition of the Scripture, received as he thought direct from the Lord and considered by him to be the important part of his work, is less interesting to us than his spiritual experiences, which are mostly described in his "Spiritual Diary," whence he copied extracts occasionally into his theological works. These experiences were admittedly of such a character that in an ordinary man they would have sufficed to qualify him for an asylum. Swedenborg talked, or thought he talked, with Luther, Calvin, St. Augustine, St. Paul—arguing theological questions with them, and disagreeing violently with the last-named—and many others, including "one who, it was given me to understand, was Cicero." All this, though not provably hallucinatory, is at least perilous stuff, and the Swedenborgians have done wisely not to base much on it.[1] But there are a few incidents on record which are "evidential," and these may reasonably give us pause before deciding for a subjective explanation of the seer's experiences.

For example, there was his clairvoyance of the Stockholm fire. In September, 1759, Swedenborg was one of a party of sixteen guests at the house of Mr. William Castel, at Gottenburg (three hundred miles from Stockholm), where he had arrived from England at 4 P.M.

[1] He also wrote automatically, heard clairaudiently, and "saw writings and the very words of the writing," even with eyes shut.

About six o'clock Swedenborg went out, and returned to the company quite pale and alarmed. He said that a dangerous fire had just broken out in Stockholm, at the Södermalm (Gottenburg is about fifty German miles from Stockholm), and that it was spreading very fast. He said that the house of one of his friends, whom he named, was already in ashes; and that his own was in danger. At eight o'clock, after he had been out again, he joyfully exclaimed, "Thank God! the fire is extinguished; the third door from my house!" This news occasioned great commotion throughout the whole city. . . . It was announced to the Governor the same evening. On Sunday morning Swedenborg was summoned to the Governor, who questioned him concerning the disaster. Swedenborg described the fire precisely, how it had begun and in what manner it had ceased, and how long it had continued. On the same day the news spread through the city, and as the Governor thought it worthy of attention, the consternation was considerably increased; because many were in trouble on account of their friends and property. . . . On Monday evening a messenger arrived at Gottenburg, who was despatched by the Board of Trade during the time of the fire. In the letters brought by him, the fire was described precisely in the manner stated by Swedenborg. On Tuesday morning a Royal Courier arrived at the Governor's with the melancholy intelligence of the fire, of the losses which it had occasioned, and of the houses it had damaged and ruined, not in the least differing from that which Swedenborg had given at the very time when it happened; for the fire was extinguished at eight o'clock.[1]

This, of course, is evidence of some supernormal faculty, but not of communication with the dead. The best piece of evidence for this latter in Swedenborg's case is the

[1] Borowsky's "Darstellung des Lebens und Charakters Immanuel Kants," Königsberg, 1804, pp. 211-25. Translation in "Dreams of a Spirit Seer," pp. 158-9 (Appendix). Letter from Kant to Charlotte von Knobloch. Kant was wrong about the date; the fire occurred on July 29, 1759. But the evidence seems strong that the clairvoyance was really contemporary with the fire (Tafel's "Documents Concerning Swedenborg," vol. ii., part i., p. 628).

following story, which was verified by a friend of Kant's, who was on the spot:

Madame Herteville (Marteville), the widow of the Dutch Ambassador in Stockholm, some time after the death of her husband, was called upon by Croon, a goldsmith, to pay for a silver service which her husband had purchased from him. The widow was convinced that her late husband had been much too precise and orderly not to have paid this debt, yet she was unable to find this receipt. In her sorrow, and because the amount was considerable, she requested Mr. Swedenborg to call at her house. After apologising to him for troubling him, she said that if, as all people say, he possessed the extraordinary gift of conversing with the souls of the departed, he would perhaps have the kindness to ask her husband how it was about the silver service. Swedenborg did not at all object to comply with her request. Three days afterwards, the said lady had company at her house for coffee. Swedenborg called and in his cool way informed her that he had conversed with her husband. The debt had been paid several months before his decease, and the receipt was in a bureau in the room upstairs. The lady replied that the bureau had been quite cleared out, and that the receipt was not found among all the papers. Swedenborg said that her husband had described to him how, after pulling out the left-hand drawer, a board would appear, which required to be drawn out, when a secret compartment would be disclosed, containing his private Dutch correspondence as well as the receipt. Upon hearing this description the whole company arose and accompanied the lady into the room upstairs. The bureau was opened; they did as they were directed; the compartment was found, of which no one had ever known before; and to the great astonishment of all, the papers were discovered there, in accordance with his description.[1]

[1] "Dreams of a Spirit Seer," Appendix, pp. 157-8. There is a rather similar test case in Jung Stilling's "Theory of Pneumatology," p. 92. The man who received the proof from Swedenborg was an intimate friend of Stilling's.

These are quoted, not as proof of Swedenborg's powers —for in a matter of this sort we require much more than one or two instances—but to show that there was at least evidence sufficient to impress a mind of the calibre of Kant's, after careful sifting; for Kant went to a good deal of trouble to verify the accounts as far as possible. It is true that he modified or retracted his favourable opinion later, but it was on metaphysical grounds of the *a priori* impossibility of knowing anything about either pre-existence or post-existence. So long as he contemplated the facts without *a priori* prejudice, he believed. Indeed, in his "Lectures on Psychology," he adopted a Swedenborgian view of man as existing in two worlds at the same time, and it is on record that he wished his half-hostile "Dreams of a Spirit Seer" to be omitted from a collection of his minor writings.[1]

While agreeing that Swedenborg probably had genuine supernormal powers, and that his works, or many of them, display much originality and are worthy of study, we cannot but admit that some of the entries in his Spiritual Diary are very incoherent, and suggest mental disorder; e.g., "I seemed to move quickly down a staircase. I only lightly touched the steps, but reached the bottom safely. There came a voice from my dear father: 'You are creating alarm, Emanuel!' He said it was wrong, but would let it pass. This denotes that yesterday I had made too free use of the cross of Christ."[2] But the Diary was not written for publication, and such things may have had meanings that were rational enough to the writer.

And there is the story, repeated by John Wesley, of Swedenborg's stripping and rolling in the mire, as de-

[1] Kant's "Werke," Edition Hartenstein, Band viii., 812.
[2] White's "Life of Swedenborg," p. 124.

scribed by Brockmer, with whom he was lodging.[1] But it turns out that Brockmer was not an eye-witness; he was only repeating hearsay. Moreover, he afterwards denied having said anything of the kind to Mr. Wesley. And our other informant, Father Mathesius, who also bases on Brockmer, was an opponent of Swedenborg, and obviously an unreliable person.[2] The story may therefore be dismissed as at least not proven.

It has also been said that Swedenborg was all intellect and little love; a man with "a small heart under the government of a large head." But here again there is another side. We are told that his landlady's children were fonder of him than of their own parents; and if, as it partly appears, this was largely due to Swedenborg's liberality in buying sweets for them, it was his wisdom rather than his affection that was at fault. And on the æsthetic side we may note that he was fond of music, and in his early days frequently acted as deputy organist at his father's church.

In worldly matters he was shrewd, and thrifty as to expenditure on himself; simple in tastes, living largely on bread, milk, and coffee—of which he was very fond—and apparently tasting wine only twice in his life. He must have spent more money on the production of his books, which fell almost dead from the press, than on his own sustenance and pleasure. On the whole, even if he did lose mental balance temporarily—which may happen to anyone in fever, such as he is said to have been suffering from on one occasion—we cannot reasonably attribute continued madness to him during the next twenty-seven

[1] White's "Life of Swedenborg," p. 131.

[2] R. L. Tafel's "Documents concerning Swedenborg," vol. ii., part 2, pp. 584-612.

years of his life. He usually dated his seership from 1745, regarding the experiences of 1743 and 1744 as preparation.

Although brought up in theological orthodoxy, Swedenborg was so deeply versed in science (for those times), and so cognisant that the physical world is a world in which everything is related to everything else, that it was natural to him to extend this principle of continuity and relation to the spiritual world. And his personal experiences confirmed this. He saw the next stage to be very like this one. Souls at death do not become completely good or completely bad at once; they do not go straight to heaven or hell. They enter at death an intermediate state which he calls the World of Spirits. The period of their stay there is not fixed:

> Some merely enter it and are immediately either taken up into heaven or cast down into hell; some remain there only a few weeks, and others several years; but none remain more than thirty years. These differences in the time of their stay depend upon the correspondence or want of correspondence of their inner and outer minds.[1]
>
> The first state of man after death is like his state in the world, because his life is still external. He has therefore a similar face, speech, and disposition, thus a similar moral and civil life; so that he thinks that he is still in the world, unless he pays close attention to the experiences he meets with, or remembers what was said to him by the angels when he was raised up, namely, that he is now a spirit. . . .
>
> All are recognised by their friends, relatives, and acquaintances when they first come into the other life, and they talk and afterwards associate with them according to their intimacy in the world. I have frequently heard those who have come from the world rejoicing at seeing their friends again, and their friends also rejoicing at their arrival. . . .
>
> Almost all are anxious to know whether they will go to

[1] "Heaven and Hell," p. 218 (Everyman edition).

heaven, and many believe that they will, because they have led a moral and civil life in the world; they do not reflect that both the wicked and the good lead a similar life outwardly, doing good to others in the same manner, going to church, hearing sermons and praying; and they have no idea that outward deeds and acts of worship are of no avail, but only the internal states of mind from which the external acts proceed.[1]

No one in the spiritual world is allowed to think and will in one way, and to speak and act in another. There must be complete sincerity, and the first stage for most spirits in a training for this.

All who have lived a good life in the world, and acted conscientiously, being such as have acknowledged the Divine Being and loved Divine truths, especially those who have applied them in life, when they are brought into the state of their inner minds, feel as if they had been awakened out of sleep, and like those who pass from darkness into light. The light of heaven, or interior wisdom, illumines their thought, and goodness, or interior affection, inspires their deeds. Heaven itself flows into their thoughts and affections with an interior blessedness and delight, of which they before knew nothing. . . . .[2]

But the state of those who have lived an evil life in the world, who have had no conscience, and have consequently denied the Divine Being, is altogether different. . . . For they are then in a state of freedom to act according to the thoughts of their will, being separated from the outward circumstances which restrained and checked them in the world. In a word, they are deprived of rationality, because the reason which they possessed in the world did not reside in their inner minds. . . . Such being their character when they are in this second state, they are brought back at short intervals into the state of their external life, and then to the recollection of what they had done when they were in the state of their internal life. Some are then ashamed, and acknowledge

[1] "Heaven and Hell," pp. 266-7-8. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 273.

that they have been insane; but some are not ashamed, and some are indignant because they are not allowed to remain always in the state of their external life.[1]

Man's character remains essentially what it was while he was in the world. The will, however, is the essential thing, not the actions. Those with good wills are separated in the second stage from those with bad wills, and the latter proceed to the infernal societies to which they are allied. The good enter a third stage of instruction, which is a preparation for heaven. The instructors are angels—i.e., advanced human spirits—and "the heathen are instructed by angels who had been of their own nation."[2] Children who die are brought up and instructed in heaven or an advanced part of the World of Spirits, not being in need of much purgation.

There are innumerable societies and grades in heaven, but there are three main divisions—the inmost or celestial, the middle or spiritual, and the lowest or natural heaven, corresponding to divisions in the mind of man, and in each of these heavens there is an exterior and an interior region, corresponding to the Understanding and the Will in the individual mind.

It is not commonly possible for spirits in one heaven to communicate with those in another, but it occurs sometimes:

I have also seen others who were permitted to descend from a higher heaven, and they were deprived of their wisdom to such an extent that they did not know the character of their own heaven. It is otherwise when the Lord, as is frequently the case, raises angels from a lower heaven into a higher one, that they may see its glory; for then they are previously prepared and are encompassed by intermediate

[1] "Heaven and Hell," pp. 273-4. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 282.

angels through whom they have communication with those among whom they come.[1]

The smaller heavenly societies consist of some hundreds of angels, others of some thousands, and some of myriads. Many angels live apart in separate houses and families; these are more immediately under the Divine guidance of the Lord, and are the best of the angels. Space is represented by difference in goodness or the state of the spirits' love. Those are far apart who differ much, those are near who differ little, for similarity brings them together. Moreover, those who resemble each other in goodness know each other, although they never met before.[2]

The hells correspond to the heavens, and are made up of many societies. They are ruled by the general outpouring of Divine Good and Truth from the heavens, which checks and restrains the effort which issues from the hells as a whole, and angels are appointed to restrain the insanities and disturbances. Punishments are according to the nature of the evil. But God "never turns away His face from men, never drives them from His presence, never casts anyone into hell and is never angry with anyone."[3] Evil is bound up with its own punishment, and they cannot be separated. And the root of all evil is self-love.

As to the location of the Spiritual Worlds, Swedenborg affirms their non-spatiality. They are conditions, not places. Change of place is merely change of state. One person becomes present to another when he intensely desires his presence, for thus he concentrates his thought upon him and puts himself in his state of mind. Con-

[1] "Heaven and Hell," p. 16. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 19. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 303.

versely, aversion removes one person from another. Thus when several are together they see each other as long as they agree, and lose sight of each other when they disagree.[1] But though this is so, the appearances are spatial, for there are hills and valleys and other natural features. The spirits have spiritual bodies, which in the good and intelligent are brighter than the noonday sun on earth, and they have garments and live in houses. The garments represent the mind. The less intelligent in heaven are clothed in white but of less brilliance. The still less intelligent have garments of different colours. But the angels of the inmost heaven are naked.

The houses in heaven are like earthly ones but more beautiful. They have many chambers, and courts with gardens. There are cities, with streets and squares; architecture like ours, but beyond it; for it is from heaven that we derive our own pale copies. The ornamentation was such as "I lack both knowledge and words to describe." The highest angels live on mountain tops, others lower down according to the state of their minds.

All institutions, says Emerson, are the lengthened shadow of one man. Thus the followers of Swedenborg shut the door which he opened, discouraging any communication with the other world on the part of anyone else, no doubt lest heterodoxy should arise. But Swedenborg himself did not claim uniqueness or forbid others to seek the experience given to him:

> Man was so created that during his life on earth amongst men he might, at the same time, also live in heaven amongst angels, and during his life amongst angels he might, at the same time, also live on earth amongst men; so that heaven and

[1] "Heaven and Hell," p. 83.

earth might be together, and might form one; men knowing what is in heaven, and angels what is in the world.[1]

This indicates that Swedenborg believed all human beings to be potentially clairvoyant, somewhat as the later Theosophists teach. He did not claim the uniqueness which some of his followers have ascribed to him.

And as a useful corrective to a possibly excessive tendency to accept a great man's dicta unquestioningly, it is interesting to compare one prophet with another and to note contradictions. Swedenborg was emphatic that all the angels had first been human beings. Jacob Boehme was equally certain that God created angels direct, out of Himself ("Aurora," p. 44). This question of the nature of angels was a much disputed one among the learned of the Middle Ages. As against Swedenborg, it would certainly seem hasty to decide that in this immense universe there are no spiritual beings who have not lived in flesh-bodies on the speck of matter which we call our Earth. It would perhaps be more consonant with what we know of nature if we assumed the existence of beings of an infinite number of grades and kinds.

[1] "Arcana Cœlestia," Howitt's "History of the Supernatural," vol. ii., p. 391.

CHAPTER III

CONFLUENCE OF SWEDENBORGIANISM AND MESMERISM IN AMERICA

As with sporadic apparitions, the fact of alleged trance and apparent intromission into the spiritual world, or at least extension of normal vision, is not uncommon. Swedenborg was not unique. The records of such experiences are extensive both in space and time. A typical case is that of Hermotimus of Clazomene, whose soul was wont to forsake its body and to bring back intelligence of many things at a distance which none could know but such as were present, during which time his body lay half dead; until his enemies burnt it, and thus cut off the retreat of the returning soul.[1] The Khond priest authenticates his claim to office by remaining from one to fourteen days in a dreamy state, caused by one of his souls being away in the divine presence.[2] The Turanian shaman lies in lethargy while his soul departs to bring hidden wisdom from the land of spirits,[3] and the same sort of thing occurs among the North American Indians. Sometimes we are specifically told that the trance is deep and memory not continuous; for Cicero mentions that when the revelations

[1] Pliny the Elder, "Hist. Nat.," vii., 53.

[2] Tylor's "Primitive Culture," p. 396. Ref. to Macpherson, "India," p. 103.

[3] *Ibid.* Ref. to Ruhs, "Finland," p. 303; Castren, "Finn. Myth.," p. 134; Bastian, "Mensch," ii., p. 319. See also section on "The Nature of the Soul" in J. G. Frazer's "Golden Bough," vol. i., p. 247 and following.

are being given, someone must be present to record them, since "these sleepers do not retain any recollection of it." [1]

After Swedenborg's death in 1772, it was natural that, in spite of his followers' attempt to maintain his uniqueness, there should be others with similar experiences. We hear, for example, of a Mrs. Lindquist, wife of a gardener who, in Stockholm in 1788, was controlled in trance by her deceased infant daughter and another young child. These spirits gave accounts of their state and expounded the Scriptures, adhering closely to the Swedenborgian views on both. Other somnambules and controls delivered themselves to a like effect.[2] Then arose Anton Mesmer (1734-1815), a Viennese doctor who settled in Paris and created a great sensation in 1778 by his magnetic (or as we should now say hypnotic or suggestive) cures. His disciples de Puységur, Pététin, Deleuze, and others continued the study, and societies for the investigation of "Animal Magnetism" sprang up in many towns. As a rule, no transcendental theory was adopted, the explanation being the mechanical one of some "fluid" proceeding from the operator; and the main interest was in the cure of disease, the entranced person being often able to diagnose not only his own ailments but also those of others, and to prescribe for them. Some investigators, however, believed that in a very deep trance the soul of the subject was partially released from the limitations due to the body, and Jung Stilling (1740-1817) may be regarded as the most notable of those who accepted a superhuman source of some of the somnambules' communications. Jung Stilling was an able and hard-working doctor, afterwards Professor of

[1] Lib. iii., "de Divin."

[2] Podmore: "Modern Spiritualism: A History and a Criticism," vol. i., pp. 76-7.

Political Economy at Marburg and Heidelberg. Some of his views have still a plausible sound, as when he says that "Light, electric, magnetic, galvanic matter, and ether appear to be all one and the same body, under different modifications. This light or ether is the element which connects soul and body and the spiritual and material world together."[1] His book is mainly a collection of ghost stories of low evidential standard, and his doctrine is Swedenborgian, with a strong flavour of apology to orthodoxy.

The French Revolution and the Napoleonic wars and their effects interfered with philosophy and science in Western Europe, and at this point the centre of interest shifts to America, and indeed for some time remains there.

New England in the early years of the nineteenth century was, like Europe, in a state of ferment, but the working was mainly in philosophy, religion, and social ideas. Crank communities abounded, preaching vegetarianism ("a return to acorns and the golden age," as Emerson humorously put it in "New England Reformers") mindcure, shakerism, and all sorts of fads. Travelling mesmerists toured the towns and villages, and clairvoyants, mesmeric "subjects," and mystical ideas abounded, as we see in the biographies of Oliver Wendell Holmes, Thoreau, Lowell, Mrs. Eddy, and others. Swedenborg's books, or some of them, had been translated, and his doctrines were taking hold of many who, after abandoning orthodoxy, were still unsatisfied with the intellectual Unitarianism which was the main religion of New England at that time. Moreover, the Universalist body was suffering disruption, and the early American Swedenborgians and Spiritualists were largely drawn therefrom. O. W. Holmes studied

[1] "Theory of Pneumatology" ("Theorie der Geister-Kunde"), p. 372.

medicine in Paris in 1833 and learnt much of mesmerism and the like, even evolving something very near the modern doctrine of the subliminal self and of multiple personality. Emerson's transcendental tract "Nature" appeared in 1836, treating the world of sense as a symbol of something more real. The popular mind was in the mood for revelations; and a revelation came.

Andrew Jackson Davis was born in 1826 in a village of New York State, moving in 1838 with his family to Poughkeepsie in the same State. His parents were working people, and he himself was in 1841 apprenticed to a shoemaker. In 1843 he was hypnotised by a tailor named Levingston, and practised for some time as clairvoyant diagnoser of disease, also prescribing remedies. In 1844 he fell into a spontaneous trance, in which Galen and Swedenborg appeared to him and instructed him concerning his mission to mankind. A Dr. Lyon and the Rev. William Fishbough became associated with him as hypnotiser and scribe respectively, and the three took lodgings in New York, Davis having two trances daily, mostly for medical clairvoyance, but also for the purpose of giving philosophical lectures, which were published in 1847 under the title of "The Principles of Nature: Her Divine Revelations." The trance-utterances were admittedly touched up as to grammar and phrasing by Davis's better-educated associates, but the book was nevertheless a surprising production, and it had considerable success; partly owing to enthusiastic advertisement by the Rev. George Bush, Professor of Hebrew in the University of New York, and a Swedenborgian. It traces the evolution of the Universe from its beginnings as an "ocean of Liquid Fire"; making many glaring mistakes in chemistry and physics, but giving probably a more ample and more

sequent account than would have been possible to Davis in his normal state. He had, however, probably read some work giving a popular account of the nebular hypothesis and of geological progression (for his geology is that of the British Isles), and there is evidence that he had read some of Swedenborg. Also he probably knew something of Hinduism. The ampler powers of the subliminal and the help of his associates may account for the rest. Part of the book is socialistic, reflecting the Fourierism then popular, and there is an atmosphere of moral enthusiasm for the regeneration of mankind which partly accounts for its popularity. It ran through thirty-four editions in thirty years.

Davis's teaching as to the future life is somewhat Swedenborgian, though differing in details, in the Hindu direction, and is not without a certain sublimity, mixed with some incomprehensibility. The following may serve as an illustration. It is taken from Vol. I of "The Great Harmonia," published in 1851, which in many volumes expanded the teaching of "The Principles of Nature," etc.

After the individual souls leave this planet (and all planes in universal space which yield such organisations of matter), they ascend to the *Second* Sphere of existence. Here *all* individuals undergo an angelic discipline, by which every physical and spiritual deformity is removed, and symmetry reigns throughout the immeasurable empire of holy beings. When all spirits shall have progressed to the Second Sphere, the various earths and planets in the Universe, which once swarmed with life and animation, will be depopulated and not a living thing will move upon their surface. And so there will be no destruction of life in that period of disorganisation, but the earth, and suns, and planets will die—their life will be absorbed by the Divine Spirit. God is Positive—all else is negative. He is the Moving Power—all else is moved. He will expand his inmost capacity and *attract* the glowing elements

of His being which permeate the boundless expanse of matter; and all matter, which is not organised into spirit, will die and fall into its original condition. But the inhabitants of the *second* sphere will ultimately advance to the *third*, then to the *fourth*, then to the *fifth*, and lastly to the *sixth;* this sixth sphere is as near the great Positive Mind as spirits can ever locally or physically approach. It is greater than all the others. It encircles infinity. It is in the neighbourhood of the divine aroma of the Deity; it is warmed and beautified infinitely by His infinite Love, and it is illuminated and rendered unspeakably magnificent by His all-embracing Wisdom. In this ineffable sphere, in different stages of individual progression, will ALL spirits dwell. They will be held together by the attractive emanations of Deity, like the safe protection of an infinite belt, which will embrace the entire sphere in which will reside incalculable multitudes of created and eternalised souls.[1]

When all spirits arrive at the Sixth Sphere of existence and the protecting Love and Wisdom of the Great Positive Mind are thrown tenderly around them, and when not a single atom of life is wandering from home in the fields and forests of immensity, then the Deity *contracts* his inmost capacity, and forthwith the boundless vortex is convulsed with a new manifestation of Motion—Motion transcending all our conceptions, and passing to and fro from centre to circumference, like mighty tides of Infinite Power. Now, the law of Association or *gravitation* exhibits its influence and tendency in the formation of new suns, new planets, and new earths. The law of progression or *refinement* follows next in order, and manifests its unvarying tendency in the production of new forms of life on those planets; and the law of Development follows next in the train, and exhibits its power in the creation of *new* plants, animals, and human spirits upon every earth prepared to receive and nourish them. Thus God will create a new Universe, and will display different and greater elements and energies therein. And thus new spheres of spiritual existences will be opened. These spheres will be *as much* superior to the present unspeak-

[1] "The Great Harmonia: Being a Philosophical Revelation of the Natural, Spiritual, and Celestial Universe," pp. 251-2.

able glories of the sixth sphere as the *sixth* sphere is now above the second sphere, which is next superior to the sphere of earth. When the new and superior Universe is completely unfolded, or when the new heavens and the new earths are developed, the spirits in the *sixth* sphere will be again in the second sphere; because the *highest* sphere in the *present* order of the Universe will constitute the *second* sphere in the *new* order which is to be developed. Thus there will be *four* spheres for the spirits and angels at the consummation of the *new* unfolding, to advance through, as there are now *four* between the *second* sphere and the sixth which we have been considering.

There have already been developed more new Universes, in the manner described, than there are atoms in the earth. And I suppose it is scarcely necessary to state that the human mind is incapable of computing the millions of centuries which are required for even those souls that now inhabit the Second Sphere to progress into the one above it—into the Third Sphere. And it would be still more useless to state that as many millions of such eternities as we can possibly conceive of, will roll into the past *ere we begin* to approach that change of Universal relations of which I have spoken.[1]

In later developments the conception of the spirit world became more concrete. Most of the writers agree that it consists of spheres situated in space, though they disagree as to details. Hudson Tuttle says:

An unknown universe exists beyond the material creation. It is formed from emanations arising from the physical universe, and is a reflection of it. This is the spiritual universe. . . .[2]

The spirit-spheres are rather zones than spheres. They are one hundred and twenty degrees wide; that is, they extend sixty degrees each side of the earth's equator. If we take the sixteenth parallel of latitude each side of the equator, and

[1] "The Great Harmonia," pp. 253-4. A useful digest of Davis's teachings is given in "The Harmonial Philosophy" (Rider, London, 1917).

[2] "Arcana of Spiritualism," p. 378 (London edition, 1876, James Burn).

imagine it projected against the blue dome of the sky, we have the boundaries of those zones. . . . The first zone, or the innermost one, is sixty miles from the earth's surface. The next external is removed from the first by about the same distance. The third is just outside the moon's orbit, or two hundred and sixty-five thousand miles from the earth.

Although atoms may be sufficiently refined when they are first ultimated from earth to pass by the first and enter the second zone, yet the second zone is, speaking in a general sense, the offspring of the first, as the first is the offspring of the earth; and, from the second, the third is elaborated by a similar process to that by which the earth exhales spiritualised matter. From the third sphere rise the most sublimated exhalations, which mingle with the emanations of the other planets, and form a vast zone around the entire solar system, including even the unknown planets beyond the vast orbit of Neptune. . . .

The thickness of the spheres varies. The first is nearly thirty, while the second is twenty, and the third is but two miles in thickness. The first is the oldest by immeasurable time, as it was the first to begin to form; and, until it supported organisations, it could exhale but a small amount of refined matter to the second, and of course the progress was delayed still longer in the creation of the third.[1]

Matter, when it aggregates there, is prone to assume the forms in which it existed here. Hence there are all the forms of life there as on earth, except those, such as the lowest plants and animals, which cannot exist surrounded by such superior conditions. The scenery of mountain and plain, river, lake, and ocean, of forest and prairie, are daguerreotypes of the same on earth. It is like earth with all its imperfections perfected and its beauties multiplied a thousandfold.[2]

The spirit holds the same relation to this spiritual universe that man holds to physical nature. The surface of the spheres is solid earth, in which trees and flowers take root, and the waters of the ocean surge perpetually on the shore. An ethereal sky arches overhead, and the stars shine with increased refulgence. The spirits *breathe* its spiritual atmosphere; they

[1] "Arcana of Spiritualism," pp. 385-7. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 388.

drink its crystal waters; they partake of its luscious fruits; they bedeck themselves with its gorgeous flowers.

It is not a fancy world, nor world of chance or miracle; but a real world—in fact, more real than is earth, as is its perfection.

The spirit walks on its surface, it sails on the lakes and oceans; in short, follows whatever pursuit or pastime it pleases, and the elements there hold the same relations to it that the elements of earth held to it while in the physical form.[1]

It may be truly said that the spirit friends of Professor Hare stated a great and cardinal truth—that the spirit-spheres surround the earth; but either from want of knowledge, or from imperfection of their means of communication, they failed to give the details in a perfect manner. However painstaking in his experiments, he seems to have received these communications with almost unquestioning credulity, and did not subject them to the criticism necessary for the elimination of error. Judging from the "internal evidence" of the statement, we infer that he was prone to fashion theories and "submit" them ready formed to the "spirits," rather than to await their spontaneous disclosures. This method is one most liable to error of any that can be pursued. A positive element is introduced, disturbing in its influence, and shutting out explanation and correctness.[2]

Tuttle and his wife were mediumistic, and got messages by table and other means. He also received impressions, and he had sittings with other mediums, but in the book he gives net teachings, not exact reports. It shows wide reading, and except for a little occasional verbosity and inflation of style is well written. The Professor Hare referred to was Professor of Chemistry in the University of Pennsylvania. He carried out many elaborate experiments with a view to the elimination of the medium's own mind, and published the result in a large volume entitled "Experimental Investigation of the Spirit Manifestations

[1] "Arcana of Spiritualism," p. 389. [2] *Ibid.*, p. 397, footnote.

Demonstrating the Existence of Spirits and their Communion with Mortals." It is a curious mixture of ingenuity and simplicity. The experiments seem to have been good, but the Professor was very ready to take the spirits at their face value, and was obviously greatly flattered by the appearance of "Washington." The book was published in 1855. Other writers, notably Epes Sargent and Judge Edmunds, added to the growing literature; many spiritualist newspapers were founded, first among them Davis's "Univercœlum," and Modern Spiritualism may be said to have got fairly under way in America in the eighteen-fifties.

But we must now turn to the phenomenal side, for it was the objective evidence supplied by the Hydesville Knockings and their derivatives that supplied the mainstay of the doctrines, or at least a necessary support.

CHAPTER IV

THE HYDESVILLE KNOCKINGS

In the township of Arcadia, Wayne County, New York State, and in a village called Hydesville, of that township, there lived a family consisting of John D. Fox, his wife Margaret, and two young daughters, Margaretta and Katie, aged fifteen and twelve years respectively. In March, 1848, these people were disturbed at night by mysterious rappings, which were found to show intelligence. For example, "it" gave any number of raps asked for. Mrs. Fox called in some neighbours, some of them vigorously sceptical and indeed contemptuous, but no explanation was forthcoming, and the raps gave the ages of those present, the number of their children, and so forth. "It" also gave its own age (thirty-one), said it was a man, with initials C. R., and that he had been murdered in that house five years before, leaving a family of three girls and two boys; also that his body had been buried in the cellar of the house. During the next few days the Fox family and some of the neighbours dug in the cellar to a depth of three feet, without finding anything but water. Three months later, further digging is said to have revealed some teeth, bones, and hair, supposed to be human. But the evidence for this is secondhand. And, moreover, no murder could be established, though there seems to have been a suspicion of something of the sort in connection with some previous tenants.

The events, however, made a great sensation, and the plot rapidly thickened. Margaretta Fox went to stay with her married sister, Mrs. Fish, at Rochester, N.Y., and Catherine visited another neighbouring town. Rappings began at both places. People came to hear, and found on returning home that they also had the power. The epidemic spread and ran through the whole of the Eastern States during the next two or three years, coalescing with trance-mediumship and clairvoyance, and powerfully buttressing the spiritualistic system of A. J. Davis.[1]

These events of 1848 are usually regarded as the beginnings of modern spiritualism. Controversy as to the true explanation has raged, off and on, ever since, and it seems impossible to settle the matter now. Some Buffalo doctors made experiments which satisfied them that the Fox girls made the raps with their knee-joints or toes—though the account is far from convincing, and their attitude obviously biased—and there is a certain amount of testimony to alleged confessions on the part of the mediums, afterwards recanted or denied. It may be that the raps were produced in many different ways. The present writer once had a friend who could make good raps with his shoulder by some sort of semi-dislocation; but he would not have made a good "medium," for he could not do it without an obvious movement of the elbow. One thing in favour of some supernormal agency in the Hydesville case and its derivatives is that answers were often given which could not have been known to the medium. But a great deal depends on how the questions were put. Facial indications might easily guide the

[1] A full and impressive account, with documents by witnesses, is given in E. W. Capron's "Modern Spiritualism: Its Facts and Fanaticisms" (Boston, U.S.A., 1855), pp. 33-56.

medium to a correct shot, as muscle-indications guide the seeker to a hidden coin, the seeker holding the hand of someone who knows where it is. There seems to be no instance of true answers being given which were not known to anyone present.

On the other hand, as against a fraud theory, this phenomenon of supernormal raps has been established by investigators like Sir William Barrett, Sir William Crookes, Dr. Joseph Maxwell, and others, whose experiments will be referred to later; and it may be that the American epidemic of the eighteen-forties and fifties was entirely genuine, at least as to the supernormal causation of the sounds. We cannot accept anything as decided either way; certainly the investigation was not conducted with the rigour which later standards demand; but, on the other hand, it would be risky to dismiss the whole thing as hocus-pocus. Unsatisfactory as this may be, suspense of judgment seems to be the only possible course.

The same may be said of certain poltergeist phenomena which created much stir—in both senses of the word—about the same time. The Rev. Dr. Phelps was a Presbyterian minister of Stratford, Connecticut, and in his house there began, in 1850, a series of disturbances which seemed inexplicable. Objects were thrown about, windows smashed, rappings heard—answering questions intelligently—and so forth. The accounts in the spiritualist papers were gorgeous in the extreme, but were mostly at second or third hand. However, a few eyewitnesses left records, and a Mr. Beach saw a matchbox move, and matches jump out, without visible cause. Being evidently of a cautious disposition, he declined to admit spirits, but supposed that "there exists in Nature an element as yet

unknown to the scientific world."[1] The disturbances continued for about eighteen months, and it is curious that the *modus operandi* was not discovered, if the agent was one of the young stepsons or stepdaughters of Dr. Phelps, as would seem possible from the fact that one of these children was apparently always somewhere about when the incidents happened. The mystery was not solved. Andrew Jackson Davis visited the place, but was obviously doubtful whether to bless or curse. So he hedged—alleging "vital electricity" for the raps, and suggesting that someone in the house did most of the other things, perhaps under spirit control.

Of those who were influenced by these early happenings, perhaps the most notable was John Worth Edmunds, formerly a Senator and afterwards a Judge of the Supreme Court of the State. He was convinced by the Rochester knockings, which answered his mental questions, and which baffled naturalistic explanations even when he took an electrician to assist in the investigation; and, later, his own daughter Laura developed clairvoyance and mediumship, speaking foreign languages normally unknown to her, and describing spirits, some of them unknown to her but recognised as deceased friends of persons present.[2] He published his book, in two portly volumes, in 1853 and 1855; it sold largely, and was probably next in influence to the works of A. J. Davis himself.

[1] Podmore's "Modern Spiritualism," i., p. 197. A full account is given.

[2] "Spiritualism," Edmunds and Dexter, ii., pp. 44-5.

CHAPTER V

EARLY DAYS IN ENGLAND

In England, as in America, there had been much interest in "mesmerism," and some mesmeric subjects had described visions of the spiritual world, somewhat in the manner of Swedenborg and Davis. But these had been interpreted more or less rationalistically, and spiritualism cannot be said to have begun until the advent of Mrs. Hayden and Mrs. Roberts from America in 1852. These mediums produced raps and table movements which spelt out messages by indicating the desired letter as the alphabet was recited or run over with the finger.[1] There is the usual conflict of testimony as to the possibility of fraud; but independent experiment by private people soon proved beyond doubt that table-movements are possible without fraud and without conscious effort on the operators' part. The investigations of Faraday, Carpenter, and others showed that the force was exerted, at least in the cases examined, by the sitters, but subconsciously. This is still regarded as true in general, though in some cases force seems to be externalised, as even the conjurer Mr. Maskelyne admitted.[2] As to the early messages, there are no

[1] Professor De Morgan, with Mrs. Hayden, obtained answers to his mentally-put questions, and was satisfied that mind reading, or something more, must be postulated. (Preface to Mrs. De Morgan's "From Matter to Spirit," pp. xlii., xliii. London: Longmans, 1863.)

[2] *Pall Mall Gazette,* April 20, 1885. Quoted by Podmore in "Modern Spiritualism," ii., p. 11.

satisfactory records, the sitters having insufficient equipment for the investigation of these new phenomena. It is natural to find that some clergymen considered the communicating intelligences to be devils, as indeed under pressure of suggestion they sometimes confessed themselves to be; also that in the presence of Protestant clerics the devils or wicked human spirits confessed their headquarters and chief to be located at Rome.[1]

The subject, however, began to emerge from obscurity about 1855, in which year Daniel Dunglas Home, a young Scottish-American, arrived in England. The record of his mediumship is one of the best of that time, many of his sitters being people of distinction and ability, and some of them eminent in science. He claimed never to have charged a fee, though he received hospitality and no doubt presents. Certainly there is no evidence of any trickery in his case, and Browning's "Mr. Sludge, the Medium," which was directed at Home, is a baseless and regrettable slander. Browning objected—legitimately enough—to his wife's interest in spiritualism, and it has been established that he unfortunately accepted vague secondhand reports of Home's being found experimenting with phosphorus in the production of spirit lights as sufficient evidence of fraud, and the reports were never substantiated.

The only possible charge that can reasonably be brought against Home is that he used undue influence, by "spirit messages," to induce a certain Mrs. Lyon to adopt him and give him a large sum of money. The case was tried and the money refunded, but Mrs. Lyon's evidence was condemned by the judge as extremely

1 "Table-Talking: Disclosures of Satanic Wonders and Prophetic Signs," by Rev. E. Gillson, Bath, 1853.

unsatisfactory, and on the whole there is no proof that Home acted fraudulently.[1]

Among the important sitters in Home's early days were Lord Adare, Sir David Brewster, Lord Brougham, Mr. and Mrs. S. C. Hall, Lord Lindsay, and Dr. J. J. Garth Wilkinson. Brewster records in his diary, published after his death,[2] that in the presence of Home, then a lad of twenty-two or twenty-three, unaccountable rappings occurred in the table, which also rose from the ground when no one was touching it; a handbell rang when no hand was near it, and moved itself without visible cause. This was in 1855. In the autumn of that year Home went to Italy, and spent several years on the Continent, staying with various people of wealth and position, and even giving séances on several occasions at the Tuileries before the Emperor and Empress of the French, also to the Tsar of Russia and the King of Prussia.

At many sittings in England the sitters were completely convinced that the spirits of their deceased relatives spoke through the entranced medium, many matters being referred to which were known to no one but the deceased person who purported to be communicating and the one to whom the message came.[3] And telepathy from the sitter seems to be rendered unlikely, or at least an incomplete explanation, by the fact that in some cases the knowledge shown went beyond the knowledge of the sitters, as when communications came from two of Mr. B. Coleman's aunts, who had died before he was born.[4]

[1] Myers's "Human Personality," vol. ii., p. 580.

[2] "The Home Life of Sir D. Brewster," by his daughter, Mrs. Gordon, pp. 257-8, Edinburgh, 1869.

[3] Myers's "Human Personality," ii., pp. 581-2.

[4] *Ibid.*

Confirmatory testimony of another kind was supplied by Lord Lindsay, who, sleeping on a sofa in Home's room—having missed his train,—saw standing near Home's bed a female figure which faded away as he watched it, afterwards recognising it, when looking at some photographs, as Home's deceased wife. A similar shadowy figure was seen on another occasion by Lord Adare and two others.

Home's more purely physical phenomena were carefully studied in 1870 and onward by Mr. (afterwards Sir William) Crookes, who testified to the operation of some agency unknown to science. An accordion, placed under the table and untouched by the medium, played tunes, and could manage a few notes, though no tune, when it was held by Mr. Crookes himself. A lath of wood on the table, three feet from Home, rose ten inches and floated about in the air for more than a minute, moving gently up and down as if it were on rippling water, the medium's hands, meanwhile, being held by Mrs. Walter Crookes and Mrs. William Crookes. A pencil on the table stood up on its point and tried to write, but fell down; the lath then slid across to it and buttressed the pencil while it tried again. Tables slid about, untouched. Luminous clouds were seen, and materialised hands, which carried flowers about. And Home himself was lifted into the air, thus paralleling the levitations of many saints.[1] All this in a fair light, usually one gas burner. The most famous of the levitations, however, occurred in 1868, at 5, Buckingham Gate, London, in the presence of Lords Lindsay and Adare and Captain Wynne. Home floated, or appeared to float, out of one window and in at another. The windows were

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vi., pp. 98-127. "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism," p. 93. This latter is out of print; it is to be hoped it may appear in Sir William's collected works.

seven feet six inches apart, eighty-five feet from the ground, and there was no ledge or foothold between them. But the accounts do not quite tally, and are not detailed enough; so this incident must be dismissed as insufficiently evidenced. But it is difficult to believe that the whole of Home's phenomena were due to fraud or hallucination. As we so often have to say, certainty concerning matters of history, which are vouched for only by a few people, most or all of whom are now dead, is not attainable, and when the alleged events are of a kind to which our own experience supplies no parallel, it is easiest to suppose that the things were done fraudulently somehow. But we must admit that this conclusion is due to prejudice, for in any other matter we should unhesitatingly accept as final the word of so distinguished a man of science as Sir William Crookes, especially when supported by such a mass of other testimony.[1]

On the other hand, there was certainly a great deal of extreme credulity and even perilous obsession in those early days. The faculty of automatic drawing and writing became widely cultivated, even by such people as Mr. and Mrs. William Howitt, and great claims were made of the agency of the angel Gabriel and the like. The doctrine of the subliminal self was still below the horizon, and it is not surprising that the phenomena were accepted by many at their face value. Indeed, no other explanation seemed possible, for it could not be doubted that the movement of the automatist's hand was involuntary. The thing became too common, among people of unimpeachable

[1] For further evidential detail *see* the Report of the Dialectical Society, and Home's "Incidents of My Life"—many of them vouched for by people of standing—which received a three-column review in the *Times* of April 9, 1863.

integrity, to admit of wholesale imputations of fraud. Accordingly "spirit-drawings" abounded, with curious mystical explanations of their symbology; also writings, and to a less extent visions, purporting to give descriptions of the next world, some few of them evidential, but most of them unverifiable.

These early happenings and interpretations, though sometimes seeming to us now absurd and mistaken, nevertheless directed thought towards truth in rather unexpected ways. For example, Keighley, in Yorkshire, had for some time in the eighteen-fifties been notable for the activities of a group of Secularists, and it was among these vigorous-minded freethinkers that Spiritualism secured its first adherents in that part of the country, thus bringing them back to religion. They started the first spiritualist paper in England, the *Yorkshire Spiritual Telegraph* (April, 1855), and for some time Keighley was the chief provincial centre of the movement. The records of these pioneers' experiences in circles may seem crude, and "Bacon," "Shelley," "Luther," etc., were accepted too easily, along with the usual Gabriel; but there was probably a nearer approach to truth in the excesses of their belief than in the excesses of their previous unbelief. When released from the small horizons of materialism the imagination is apt to run loose a little in an unwonted freedom, until the critical faculty reasserts itself.

During the next few years many "mediums" arose, some coming from America. It is not now possible to disentangle true from false, but it seems fairly certain that false some of them were. The Davenport Brothers caused much mystification in London by their physical phenomena; but in Liverpool the tying in the rope trick was too efficient, and a riot followed the abortive performance.

The same thing happened in Leeds and Huddersfield, and the Davenports' career in England came to a sudden and inglorious end. Even the *Spiritual Magazine* admitted that trickery was occasionally used by genuine mediums when the occult power was lacking, and this has been amply verified since, some of the smaller physical phenomena being produced along the line of least resistance, perhaps unconsciously, if conditions are not stringent, as in the case of Eusapia Palladino. But such elaborate performances as those of the Davenports hardly admit of this mixed hypothesis. Sleight-of-hand, pure and simple, seems an adequate explanation. Moreover, beginning when they were fourteen and fifteen, the brothers had plenty of practice before coming to England ten years later.[1]

The existence of occasional counterfeits, however, does not negate, but rather confirms, the existence of the real thing which they copy, and it is undeniable that there were many private mediums who cannot hastily be supposed to have been deliberately fraudulent. Mrs. Everitt was one of the best known of these, her mediumship beginning in the early eighteen-sixties and extending over a long period. Her phenomena were largely raps and the direct voice—i.e., voices produced in the dark and ap-

[1] "A Biography of the Brothers Davenport," by Dr. T. L. Nichols (London, 1864), describes their phenomena in a humorous and unfanatical yet very sympathetic manner, but Dr. Nichols's own experience was slight. He quotes accounts of other people's sittings, and relies even on the brothers' own statements as to their early history in America. It is noteworthy, however, that the alleged phenomena, raps, levitation, appearance of hands from the cabinet, etc., are very like those later established as occurring in the presence of Home and Eusapia, and there may have been some genuine happenings. But in view of performances like Houdini's, mere tying—in a dark sitting, too—can never eliminate the possibility of sleight of hand.

parently not issuing from the medium's larynx. The present writer knows several competent people who sat with Mrs. Everitt, and who were completely convinced of the genuineness of the manifestations. Another lady who became similarly famous was Miss Nichol (afterwards Mrs. Guppy), whose phenomena Dr. A. Russel Wallace investigated.[1] The medium was lifted upon the table, flowers and ferns damp with dew were brought into the room by supernormal means, spirits sent messages of various kinds, and so forth. These people were in comfortable circumstances and made no charge; the Everitts kept open house, and would have been better off without the mediumship; Miss Nichol would have been a serious loser by the cost of the flowers alone. We cannot reasonably, therefore, assume ordinary fraud, unless we also assume a sort of lunacy, for which there is no evidence. Either the things were done unconsciously by the medium in some irresponsible hypnoid state, or they were definitely supernormal, and possibly due to the agency claimed.

In the early history of Spiritualism in England a noteworthy feature was the investigation and Report of the London Dialectical Society. This body appointed, in 1869, a Committee of over forty persons, including Mr. Charles Bradlaugh and several medical and legal gentlemen, "to investigate the phenomena alleged to be Spiritual Manifestations." Professor Huxley and Mr. George Henry Lewes were invited to co-operate, but declined the adventure. Their letters are printed in the Report. Huxley's was vigorous and clear. like all his writings. ". . . But supposing the phenomena to be genuine—they do not interest me. If anybody would endow me with the faculty of listening to the chatter of

[1] "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," pp. 132-7 (second edition).

CANISIUS COLLEGE LIBRARY

old women and curates in the nearest cathedral town, I should decline the privilege, having better things to do. And if the folk in the spiritual world do not talk more wisely and sensibly than their friends report them to do, I put them in the same category."[1] But I, for one, am such a fervent admirer of Huxley that I do not altogether accept his statement that an unexplained phenomenon would not have interested him. His was such an eager and scientific mind that any new phenomenon—if he thought it at all likely that it *was* new—interested him very much. The facts were that he was very busy with other things, that he believed spiritualistic phenomena to be trickery and that it would take him—a non-expert in conjuring—a long time to find out how it was done, even if he succeeded at all. One can understand and to some extent excuse his attitude, though we must admit a certain lapse from scientific method, inasmuch as he judged without investigation.

The Committee or sub-committees did a certain amount of first-hand research. For example, sub-committee No. 1 held forty meetings, always at the house of one or other of its members, with no professional medium present. At the beginning, four-fifths of the sub-committee were "wholly sceptical as to the reality of the alleged phenomena, firmly believing them to be the result either of *imposture* or of *delusion,* or of *involuntary muscular action.*" But surprising conversions followed. "It was only by irresistible evidence, under conditions that precluded the possibility of either of these solutions, and after trial and test many times repeated, that the most sceptical of your sub-committee were slowly and reluctantly convinced that the phenomena

[1] "Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society" (1873 edition), p. 229. London: J. Burns.

exhibited in the course of their protracted inquiry were veritable facts."[1] The phenomena thus established were movements of heavy objects such as tables, "without the employment of any muscular force, without contact or material connection of any kind between such substances and the body of any person present,"[2] and in a good light; also raps, "distinctly audible to all present, from solid substances not in contact with, nor having any visible or material connection with, the body of any person present, and which sounds are proved to proceed from such substances by the vibrations which are distinctly felt when they are touched."[3] Moreover, "this force is frequently directed by intelligence."[4] Some of the phenomena occurred at thirty-four out of the forty sittings, and the sub-committee was finally unanimous in its conclusions. Notes were taken on each occasion and are printed in the Report. No opinion is given as to the nature of the intelligence or intelligences concerned; the sub-committee members were content to state their acceptance of inexplicable phenomena which showed intelligence of some sort.

Sub-committee No. 2 was prepared to go a little further. Not only does its report confirm that of No. 1, but it includes messages from *soi-disant* spirits, usually given by raps as the alphabet was repeated, and seems to agree that the spirits made out a case. They were usually stated to be friends or relatives of one or other of the sitters. No professional medium was employed, there was always a good light when the things happened (curiously enough, a few dark sittings were complete

[1] "Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society," p. 9.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 9. [3] *Ibid.* [4] *Ibid.*

failures), and the sittings were mostly held at the houses of two members who, at the beginning, were completely sceptical.

Other sub-committees sent in reports of less striking character, the members evidently not happening to include anyone possessing much psychic faculty.

Various members described their own individual experiences, those of Mr. H. D. Jencken, barrister-at-law, being specially interesting. He had seen levitations of a table and a semi-grand piano at his own house, no one touching the objects; also had seen an accordion suspended in space for ten or twenty minutes, supported and being played by an invisible agency.[1] He had also seen the handling of live coals, levitations, and elongations,[2] spirit hands which dissolved slowly away as he gripped them,[3] and many other things, mostly with the mediumship of D. D. Home. Mr. Jencken, supporting his case from orthodox science, neatly quoted Grove as saying: "Myriads of organised beings may exist imperceptible to our vision, even if we were among them, and we might be equally imperceptible to them."[4]

Mr. Cromwell F. Varley, the well-known electrician, also gave remarkable testimony. His wife was mediumistic, and on one occasion the bursting of three ulcers on her chest was foretold, the exact date and minute being given, with full instructions as to what was to be done. The first was to break in ten days from the date of the prediction, at 5.36 P.M. The things happened exactly as stated. So with the other predictions, made three weeks

[1] "Report on Spiritualism of the Committee of the London Dialectical Society," p. 117.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 119. [3] *Op. cit.*, p. 120.

[4] "Correlation of Physical Forces," p. 161.

and a fortnight before the respective events. Apparently the information of the intelligences speaking through Mrs. Varley, whatever they were, was of extreme value, and probably saved her life, for Mr. Varley made special arrangements to be with his wife at the times specified, in order to apply the prescribed treatment.

Most of the experiences described in the Report are of "physical-phenomena" order, and are consequently not directly evidential of spirit-agency. They may be due to unknown faculties in the incarnate people present. But the one class shades into the other; evidential messages are interlocked with physical phenomena, and it seems likely that these latter are caused by spirits at least sometimes. How spirits can act on matter we do not know; but then we do not know how our spirits act on it now. We do not know "how" we move our own arms; but the fact is that we do.

One rather significant thing about the Dialectical Society's report is that though the Committee found it easy to get people to give testimony as to the reality of the phenomena in question, they found it difficult to get *negative* testimony. The sceptics, though vigorous and fluent in newspapers and wherever they could not be cross-examined, became remarkably shy birds when asked to appear before a committee of lawyers and doctors—even a sceptical committee—and to state their reasons for believing the phenomena to be due to trickery or mal-observation. The inference seems to be that the sceptics in question either had no personal experience of the alleged phenomena, or, having had it, were unable to say how the trick was done or where the mal-observation occurred. Probably total inexperience was the truth in most cases. It is

easier to deny than to inquire. Consequently the Committee, "while successful in procuring evidence of believers in the phenomena and in their supernatural origin, almost wholly failed to obtain evidence from those who attributed them to fraud or delusion." (p. 1.)

A curious and interesting case among the professionals is that of David Duguid. A Glasgow cabinet-maker by trade, he discovered that he was a trance-medium, and purported to execute paintings under the control of the Dutch painters, Jacob Ruysdael and Jan Steen. Friends of mine sat with Duguid (who is now dead), and were inclined to believe in some supernormality; but the sittings being in the dark it was difficult to decide. Moreover, substitution of paintings executed before and held in readiness was not entirely excluded. On the other hand, a curious revelational romance received through him and published under the title, "Hafed, Prince of Persia," certainly suggests the genuineness of the trance, without being at all convincing as to any agency beyond the medium's subconsciousness.[1]

But the most striking phenomenon of the spiritualist repertory was that of "materialisation." This had already been observed in America at sittings with the Fox girls, and in England to some extent with Home and others; but the most important evidence for this phase was ob-

[1] Hafed is said to have been a Persian prince who lived at the beginning of the Christian era. He was one of the Wise Men of the East who were guided to Judæa by the star; and later Jesus spent some years with him in Persia, travelling also in Judæa, Egypt, and Greece. So we are told, and we cannot disprove it. But we recognise that the gap in the history of Jesus's life between twelve and thirty is a tempting thing for the religious imagination to work on, and the revelations of Hafed may be of the same kind, fundamentally, as Mlle. Hélène Smith's revelations about the language and customs of the inhabitants of Mars, namely, subliminal creations, resembling dreams.

tained by Sir (then Mr.) William Crookes.[1] Sitting with Miss Florence Cook, often at his own house and with no discoverable confederate present, the form of "Katie King" appeared, in shining white robes and with golden hair, the medium being dark-haired and dressed in black. Moreover, their pulse-rates were different, the medium's ears were pierced for ear-rings and Katie's were not, and Katie was much the taller of the two. Whatever the explanation, it was not the sceptic's ordinary one of the medium masquerading in white muslin. (Nor was it hallucination, for Katie was photographed over forty times.) It is difficult to believe that a confederate could have been present, or that she could have disappeared as Katie did. But it is also difficult to believe the spirit-theory. So there it remains. Sir William Crookes was convinced that Katie was not an ordinary incarnate human being, and he has frequently said that he has seen no reason to change his opinion.[2] And he has the best right to pronounce, for he was there and we were not.

Another famous physical medium of those days was William Eglinton, a young man who produced materialisation, slate-writing by alleged spirits without the use of a physical body (i.e., "direct" writing), and so forth. He was born in 1857, was entranced at a home sitting in 1874 —his father, an agnostic, having been sufficiently impressed, by a debate on spiritualism, to try for table-movements—and took up professional mediumship in 1875. He travelled on the Continent, in America, South Africa, and India; sitting, e.g., with the General commanding the Indian Army. In 1876 he gave impressive sittings at Mrs. Macdougal Gregory's, where Sir Garnet (afterwards

[1] "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism," 1874.

[2] E.g., *International Psychic Gazette, December,* 1917, pp. 61-2.

Lord) Wolseley, General Brewster, and other notable people were present. At Dr. Nichol's house in Malvern, in a fair light, the medium came out of the cabinet and was seen along with the spirit form. One slight, white-robed figure, with golden hair flowing over her shoulders, purported to be the daughter of Dr. and Mrs. Nichol, who were fully convinced. Another form dematerialised in front of Dr. Nichol, "gradually shrinking from a good six feet high—a head taller than the medium—to a pigmy size, then melting into the air, leaving only a mass of gauzy drapery, which was held up and shaken before us to show that the form had vanished."[1] Dr. Nichol describes also the tying of knots in a piece of string, the ends of which were knotted and sealed.

As described, these phenomena are indeed inexplicable. But it is difficult or impossible to feel sure that the description covers all that happened. In any ordinary conjuring trick the thing is impossible as the spectator describes it; the point is that he does not describe it fully —does not see all that is done. Eglinton, if fraudulent, was exceptionally skilful; but Mr. S. J. Davey, of the S.P.R., afterwards equalled his slate-writing performances, and, as to materialisation, it seems established that Archdeacon Colley found a false beard and some muslin in Eglinton's possession, both matching pieces which had been cut from the hair and robe of the "materialised spirit" Abdullah! After that, it hardly seems necessary to argue the point as to whether Eglinton had any gleams of genuineness.

And it is unquestionable that as the critical standard

[1] "'Twixt Two Worlds: a Narrative of the Life and Work of William Eglinton," by John S. Farmer, p. 26. London: The Psychological Press, 1886.

has risen, supposed "mediums" of this class have diminished in number. Many have been exposed, and at the present time there is, I think, only one professional in England. I have had accounts from friends who have certainly had curious and in some cases convincing experiences with him; but, on the whole, his phenomena cannot be considered to be established as beyond the range of known means, helped out by vivid imagination excited by sitting in darkness and expectancy. We know little about the psychology of such conditions, and it is not unlikely that sitters pass into a mental state not quite normal, and closely analogous to hypnosis. Thus far on the negative side; but it must be admitted that the question remains open, for modern science has taught us the unwisdom of declaring anything to be impossible. Materialisation may be a fact. But the evidence is not conclusive yet.

CHAPTER VI

WILLIAM STAINTON MOSES

PROBABLY everyone has some mediumistic power in one or other direction, and the history of the subject is full of the minor phenomena of half-developed mediums, as well as the performances of persons who were remarkable people if genuine, but whose genuineness was not sufficiently attested. It is therefore necessary, in a volume which cannot be exhaustive, to select the most outstanding cases, remarking, however, that they are only the highest summits, so to speak, and that their exceptionality is really less than would appear in a fuller history.

William Stainton Moses, whose life F. W. H. Myers has justly called one of the most extraordinary lives of the nineteenth century,[1] was born in Lincolnshire on November 5th, 1839, the son of a grammar-school headmaster. He showed ability, and the family moved to Bedford in 1852 in order that he might have the educational advantages of Bedford School, where he did well, gaining a scholarship at Exeter College, Oxford. There he showed himself hardworking, but not brilliant. At twenty-four he was ordained by Bishop Wilberforce, and took a curacy at Kirk Maughold, near Ramsey, Isle of Man. He was an active parish clergyman, was liked by the people, and showed special courage and zeal during an outbreak of smallpox, helping, in one recorded case, to nurse and afterwards to bury a man whose malady

[1] "Human Personality," vol. ii., pp. 225-6.

was so violent that it was difficult to get anyone to attend to him.

After four years at Kirk Maughold he became curate of St. George's, Douglas, where also he was liked both as man and as preacher. In 1870 he took a curacy in Dorsetshire, and created a similarly good impression there; but throat trouble and other illness led him to give up preaching, and he became private tutor to the son of Dr. Stanhope Speer. In 1871 he accepted a mastership in University College School, London, which he held for seventeen years. Weakened by gout and repeated attacks of influenza, he died in September, 1892.

The physical phenomena began in 1872, and continued for about eight years. They occurred at sittings held with friends, usually Dr. and Mrs. Stanhope Speer and Mr. F. W. Percival (barrister-at-law and examiner in the Education Department), though occasionally Mr. Serjeant Cox —who was not a spiritualist, but admitted the supernormality of the phenomena—or some other friend was present. The table moved of itself, without contact, the sitters often being two feet away from it; and raps, sometimes amounting to sledge-hammer blows, were heard. These things were not always in the dark, or at a place where trickery could have been arranged. For example, Serjeant Cox says:

> On Tuesday, June 2nd, 1873, a personal friend [Mr. Moses] came to my residence in Russell Square to dress for a dinner party to which he was invited. He had previously exhibited considerable power as a psychic. Having half an hour to spare, we went into the dining-room. It was just six o'clock, and of course broad daylight. I was opening letters; he was reading the *Times*. My dining-table is of mahogany, very heavy, old-fashioned, six feet wide, nine feet long. It stands on a Turkey carpet, which much increases the difficulty of

moving it. A subsequent trial showed that the united efforts of two strong men standing were required to move it one inch. There was no cloth upon it, and the light fell full under it. No person was in the room but my friend and myself. Suddenly, as we were sitting thus, frequent and loud rappings came upon the table. My friend was then sitting holding the newspaper with both hands, one arm resting on the table, the other on the back of the chair, and turned sideways from the table, so that his legs and feet were not under the table, but at the side of it. Presently the solid table quivered as if with an ague fit. Then it swayed to and fro so violently as almost to dislocate the big pillar-like legs, of which there are eight. Then it moved forward about three inches. I looked under it to be sure that it was not touched; but still it moved, and still the blows were loud upon it.

This sudden access of the Force at such a time and in such a place, with none present but myself and my friend, and with no thought then of invoking it, caused the utmost astonishment to both of us. My friend said that nothing like it had ever before occurred to him. I then suggested that it would be an invaluable opportunity, with so great a power in action, to make trial of *motion without contact,* the presence of two persons only, the daylight, the place, the size and weight of the table, making the experiment a crucial one. Accordingly we stood upright, he on one side of the table, I on the other side of it. We stood two feet from it, and held our hands eight inches above it. In one minute it rocked violently. Then it rose three inches from the floor on the side on which my friend was standing. Then it rose equally on my side.[1]

Other phenomena occurring at the Speer sittings were loud raps and musical (e.g., harp-like) sounds, these latter purporting to be produced by certain musical spirits attracted to the circle by the presence of Mr. Charlton

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. ix., pp. 259-60. My account as a whole is chiefly indebted to the two articles by Myers on "The Experiences of W. Stainton Moses" in vols. ix. and xi.

Speer,[1] supernormal scents, levitation of the medium to near the ceiling, the bringing of objects from other rooms —e.g., a handbell, which rang all the way—masses of luminous vapour, globes and columns of light, materialised hands, direct writing, etc., Mr. Moses being usually in trance. But the physical phenomena were always said to be secondary; they were produced as authentication of the religious and philosophic teaching received by Mr. Moses through his automatic writing, which began in 1873 and continued more or less until his death. The communicators were numerous, often including relatives or friends of the sitters; but for the most part they were of more famous and more ancient order, such as Grocyn, Beethoven, Dr. Dee, Swedenborg; while the most important group consisted of spirits still more remote, eminent but not divine, headed by "Imperator," with colleagues "Rector," "Doctor," "Prudens," etc., who seemed to be specially in charge of the medium, mainly with a view to the teachings given through him. "Imperator" gave his real earth name to Mr. Moses, but the latter did not publish it, there being no way of verifying it. Mr. Myers was told, and one or two other friends, and probably it is now more or less generally known in interested circles; consequently its evidential value has nearly evaporated. Nevertheless, if "Imperator" communicated through some other medium, and gave the same real name, and if it seemed unlikely that the medium had any knowledge of it, the fact would be of interest. But "Imperator's" identity does not seem very convincing, and indeed it is claimed that he was more of an "influence" than a person, as we understand person-

[1] Dr. A. Russel Wallace obtained harp-like and other musical sounds, in addition to raps, in his own house and with a non-professional medium. ("Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," p. 143, 1896 edition.)

ality. Long-departed and far-progressed spirits are said to drop many elements of personality, and the idea is reasonable enough. Whatever "Imperator" was, there is no doubt about his aim. This was to lead Mr. Moses out of his rather narrow and dogmatic religious belief, into the theology of the Broad Church school.

The sittings having been of a private nature, no great amount of publishable evidence of the identity of manifesting spirits is available, but one or two illustrations may be given.

At a sitting with the Speers in August, 1874, at Shanklin, in the Isle of Wight, a spirit came and gave the name of Abraham Florentine. He said he had been in the war of 1812, and had died recently at Brooklyn, U.S.A., on August 5th, aged eighty-three years, one month, and seventeen days. There was some doubt as to whether the month and days referred to his age or to the length of his illness; but this was cleared up at a sitting next day. Both the name and the alleged facts were entirely new to all the sitters. Inquiries, however, were made in America, and it was found that an Abraham Florentine had died at Brooklyn on August 5th as stated, and the other details were correct except that the seventeen days should have been twenty-seven days, for he was eighty-three on June 8th. ("Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xi., pp. 82-5).

One evening at Mrs. Makdougal Gregory's, in the middle of dinner, Mr. Moses felt an unpleasant influence from some spirit present, and afterwards obtained an automatic drawing of a horse and a sort of a truck, with the message: "I killed myself—I killed myself to-day—Baker Street—medium passed—killed myself to-day, under a steam-roller. . . ." Mr. Moses had passed through Baker Street in the afternoon, but had heard nothing of

any such incident; but it turned out that the thing had happened as described. On the front of the steam-roller a horse was represented in brass, which perhaps accounts for the horse in the drawing. The tragedy was reported in an evening paper—the *Pall Mall Gazette*—but none of the party had seen it.

Another good case was that of "Blanche Abercromby," and it is specially striking in several ways. Mr. Moses, at his secluded lodgings in the North of London, received on a certain Sunday, near midnight, a communication purporting to come from the spirit of Blanche Abercromby (pseudonym), a lady whom he had once met. The message said it was in her writing, for evidence' sake, but publication was forbidden. Mrs. Speer, however, was told of it. Mr. Moses marked it "private" and gummed down the leaf. It turned out that the lady in question had died in the afternoon, 200 miles from London. When Mr. Myers went through Mr. Moses' note-books after the latter's death, he found this script, and compared the handwriting with that of "Blanche Abercromby," whom he happened to have known. The resemblance was indubitable and was confirmed by others. There is no reason to suppose that Mr. Moses had ever seen any of "Blanche Abercromby's" handwriting. One detail at first seemed wrong, but afterwards turned out to be an added confirmation. The capital "A" was different from the "A" in the letters first found for comparison; but the communicator's son—an unwilling witness, not friendly to the subject—said that during the last year of his mother's life she had taken to making the "A" as it appeared in the script.[1]

Many more such cases are on record, but the foregoing

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xi., pp. 96-8.

illustrations must suffice; students may consult "Proceedings," S.P.R., vols. viii., ix. and xi., for further details. As to explanations, a forgotten perception or telepathy from some living mind may account for some of the incidents; but an unprejudiced consideration of the whole mass of the evidence renders such explanation doubtfully acceptable. As to deliberate concoction with intent to deceive, plus the fraud theory of the physical phenomena, those who knew Mr. Moses are the best judges of his character. Mr. Myers knew him for eighteen years (1874-92), and this is what he says:

He responded to my unfeigned interest with a straightforward intimacy of conversation on the experiences of which I cared so much to learn. But there was no such close personal attraction as is likely to prompt me to partiality as a biographer; and, indeed, both Edmund Gurney and I were conscious in him of something like the impatience of a schoolmaster towards slow students; natural enough in a man whose inborn gifts have carried him irresistibly to a conviction on the edge of which less favoured persons must needs pause and ponder long. I am bound to add that the study of his notebooks, by making him more intimately known to me as he was in his best days, has brought me nearer to the warm and even enthusiastic estimate implied in the letters of various more intimate friends of his which lie before me.

More important, however, than the precise degree of attractiveness, or of spiritual refinement, in Mr. Moses' personal demeanour are the fundamental questions of sanity and probity. On these points neither I myself, nor, so far as I know, any person acquainted with Mr. Moses, has ever entertained any doubt. "However perplexed for an explanation," says Mr. Massey, "the crassest prejudice has recoiled from ever suggesting a doubt of the truth and honesty of Stainton Moses." "I believe that he was wholly incapable of deceit," writes Mr. H. J. Hood, barrister-at-law, who knew him for many years.[1]

[1] F. W. H. Myers on "The Experiences of W. Stainton Moses," "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. ix., p. 247.

On the question of sanity, Dr. Johnson, of Bedford, wrote to Mr. Myers as follows:

March 24th, 1893.

As the intimate friend and medical adviser of the late Stainton Moses I have had ample opportunities of thoroughly knowing his character and mental state.

He was a man even in temper, painstaking and methodical, of exceptional ability, and utterly free from any hallucination or anything to indicate other than a well-ordered brain.

He was a firm believer in all that he uttered or wrote about matters of a spiritual nature, and he impressed me—and, I believe, most others he came in contact with—with the genuineness of his convictions and a firm belief not only that he believed in the statements he had made and written, but that they were the outcome of a mind which had given itself up entirely to the study of a subject which he considered of essential value and importance to the welfare of his fellow-men.

I have attended him in several very severe illnesses, but never, in sickness or at other times, has his brain shown the slightest cloudiness or suffered from any delusion. I not only consider that he believed what he stated, but I think that those who knew him best would not for an instant doubt that all he stated were facts and words of truth.

Sincerely yours,

Wm. G. Johnson.[1]

In another letter Dr. Johnson says:

He was a most lovable character; kind and generous in his every action; and with a fund of information on most subjects which made him a most welcome guest.[2]

And Dr. Eve, headmaster of University College School, wrote as follows to Professor Sidgwick:

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. ix., p. 251. It is perhaps not irrelevant to note that Mr. Moses was normal in physical appearance; of middle height, strongly built, full features, with thick dark hair and beard. There is no reason to believe he was of Jewish descent; the name seems to have been altered from "Mostyn" by some ancestor.

[2] *Ibid.*

Stainton Moses was an excellent colleague. He confined himself entirely to English; in that subject he took classes in all parts of the school, and his work was always well and methodically done. He taught essay-writing well, and was very skilful in appreciating the relative value of boys' essays, which is not easy. He was much looked up to by boys, and had considerable influence over them. On general points connected with the management of the school he was one of the colleagues to whom I most naturally turned for advice, and I have every reason to be grateful to him.

Yours very sincerely,
H. W. Eve.[1]

As to Dr. Speer, he was M.D. of Edinburgh, held various hospital posts with credit, and "was much valued as a practising physician at Cheltenham and in London."[2] His "cast of mind was strongly materialistic, and it is remarkable that his interest in Mr. Moses' phenomena was from first to last of a purely scientific, as contrasted with an emotional or a religious, nature."[3]

It is not possible to give more than the foregoing sketch here, but what has been said may be sufficient to indicate that the life of Stainton Moses furnishes a real problem which cannot safely be dismissed offhand. He was not a professional medium, took no fee, and sat only with intimate friends. If he found it amusing to delude them in such elaborate fashion over a period of twenty years, there must have been a queer mental twist in him; and there is no evidence of anything of the kind. Indeed, as Myers says,[4] the idea that Stainton Moses produced the phenomena fraudulently is both physically and morally incredible. Whether they were due to spirits is another question, not to be finally settled until we know the extent

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. ix., p. 251. [2] *Op. cit.*, p. 248.
[3] *Op. cit.*, p. 248. [4] "Human Personality," vol. ii., p. 227.

of the subliminal self's hidden powers; but it has to be admitted that the evidence is strong.

The student may be referred to Mr. Moses' books, "Spirit Teachings" (written automatically and embodying the Broad Church theology which the spirit group mainly came to inculcate), and "Higher Aspects of Spiritualism." The former is impressive, though it has been urged that it is not beyond Mr. Moses' own powers, also that its stateliness approaches pomposity. Whatever its source, most people will agree that its matter is good. If the author was Mr. Moses' subliminal consciousness, that subliminal was ahead of his supraliminal in wisdom, if not in phrasing.

CHAPTER VII

THE SOCIETY FOR PSYCHICAL RESEARCH

In 1875 Serjeant Cox, F. W. H. Myers, Stainton Moses, and a few others, formed a "Psychological Society" for the discussion of alleged supernormal happenings, but on the death of Serjeant Cox in 1879 it was dissolved. In 1882 Professor (afterwards Sir William) Barrett, who had already done some experimenting and had brought hypnotic and telepathic phenomena to the notice of the British Association for the Advancement of Science, consulted Stainton Moses with a view to founding a society under better auspices, and the Society for Psychical Research came into being, with Professor Henry Sidgwick as first President, and Myers and Edmund Gurney as chief workers. The objects of the Society are stated in an official leaflet as below :—

OBJECTS OF THE SOCIETY.

The Society for Psychical Research, which was incorporated in August, 1895, was founded at the beginning of 1882, for the purpose of making an organised and systematic attempt to investigate various sorts of debatable phenomena which are *prima facie* inexplicable on any generally recognised hypothesis. From the recorded testimony of many competent witnesses, past and present, including observations recently made by scientific men of eminence in various countries, there appeared to be, amidst much illusion and deception, an important body of facts to which this description would apply, and which, therefore, if incontestably established, would be of the very highest interest. The task of examining such

residual phenomena had often been undertaken by individual effort, but never hitherto by a scientific society organised on a sufficiently broad basis. The following are the principal departments of work which the Society at present undertakes:

1. An examination of the nature and extent of any influence which may be exerted by one mind upon another, otherwise than through the recognised sensory channels.
2. The study of hypnotism and mesmerism, and an inquiry into the alleged phenomena of clairvoyance.
3. A careful investigation of any reports, resting on testimony sufficiently strong and not too remote, of apparitions coinciding with some external event (as for instance a death) or giving information previously unknown to the percipient, or being seen by two or more persons independently of each other.
4. An inquiry into various alleged phenomena apparently inexplicable by known laws of nature, and commonly referred by Spiritualists to the agency of extra-human intelligences.
5. The collection and collation of existing materials bearing on the history of these subjects.

The aim of the Society is to approach these various problems without prejudice or prepossession of any kind, and in the same spirit of exact and unimpassioned inquiry which has enabled Science to solve so many problems, once not less obscure nor less hotly debated. The founders of the Society have always fully realised the exceptional difficulties which surround this branch of research; but they nevertheless believed that by patient and systematic effort some results of permanent value might be attained.

* * * * *

The Council will also be glad to receive reports of investigations from individual Members or Associates, or from persons unconnected with the Society.

Any such report, or any other communication relating to the work of the Society, should be addressed to the Secretary, Society for Psychical Research, 20, Hanover Square, London, W., or to the Hon. Secretaries, Mrs. Henry Sidgwick, 27,

Grange Road, Cambridge, and the Hon. Everard Feilding, 5, John Street, Mayfair, London, W.

Meetings of the Society, for the reading and discussion of papers, are held periodically; and the papers then produced, with other matter, are, as a general rule, afterwards published in the Proceedings. It is proposed sometimes to include in the Proceedings translations and reviews of important foreign papers on the various branches of Psychical Research.

* * * * *

A Monthly Journal (from October to July inclusive) is also issued to Members and Associates. The Journal contains evidence freshly received in different branches of the inquiry, which is thus rendered available for consideration, and for discussion by correspondence, before selections from it are put forward in a more public manner.

The Council, in inviting the adhesion of Members, think it desirable to quote a preliminary Note, which appeared on the first page of the original Constitution of the Society, and still holds good.

> NOTE.—To prevent misconception, it is here expressly stated that Membership of the Society does not imply the acceptance of any particular explanation of the phenomena investigated, nor any belief as to the operation, in the physical world, of forces other than those recognised by Physical Science.

It will probably be admitted that in these temperate statements there is not much sign of quackery or hysteria. The Society tries to be scientific, to follow the facts, wherever they may lead. It exists for investigation, not propaganda. The only belief that a member need have is the belief that the phenomena mentioned are worth investigation. And anyone who decides, without inquiry, that they are not, is as much an *a priorist* as the most bigoted mediæval theologian. We ought to have grown out of this by now, but error dies hard. Paley recognised that the scientific attitude was the only right one, for he

says that, "This contempt prior to examination is an intellectual vice, from which the greatest faculties of mind are not free. I know not, indeed, whether men with the greatest faculties are not the most subject to it"[1]—a compliment which we have pleasure in passing on to Mr. Edward Clodd and Dr. Charles Mercier.

The S.P.R., then, has no creed. It exists for investigation. It has been attacked, and continues to be attacked, from many sides; it has to bear, in Myers's phrase, "the floundering platitudes of obscurantist orthodoxy" and the "smug sneers of popular science, belittling what it will not try to understand."[2] But it goes on its way, and perhaps most of its members perceive a certain humour in the alliance of Roman Catholics like Father Vaughan, High Anglicans like Lord Halifax, and Rationalists like Mr. Clodd, not one of whom has any considerable first-hand knowledge, and all with one accord assailing those who have.[3] Perhaps these strange bedfellows have a subconscious suspicion that they are on the side where truth happens not to be, hence their readiness to accept any sort of ally. A Manchester Canon recently seems to have relied on Mr. Clodd as an authority (no doubt to the great joy of the Rationalists) concerning a supposed confession of Mrs. Piper, the confession referred to being, of course, entirely mythical.[4]

For some years the "Proceedings" of the Society were largely occupied with records and discussions of experiments in hypnotism and thought-transference, the

[1] "Evidences," p. 357.

[2] "Human Personality," vol. ii., p. 293.

[3] Mr. Clodd, with commendable frankness, says that he did attend one séance about fifty years ago, but does not remember much about it. (*International Psychic Gazette*, April, 1918.)

[4] *See* Part II., ch. iii., p. 185.

latter faculty being held by most of the investigators to be satisfactorily established by the facts. There were also a few reports on apparitions, haunted houses, premonition, automatic writing, crystal vision, and multiple personality. For the purposes of the present volume, however, the Society begins to be specially interesting in regard to the investigation of Mrs. Piper, and the history of this remarkable case must be briefly sketched.

In 1885-6 Professor William James, of Harvard, had about a dozen sittings with Mrs. Piper, whose mediumship had only just begun, and he also sent many people to her anonymously. The results convinced him that she possessed some supernormal power.[1] The control, purporting to be a deceased French doctor named Phinuit, showed a surprising amount of knowledge of the sitters' deceased relatives, whom he claimed to be able to hunt up on "the other side." This knowledge went beyond what could reasonably be supposed to be possessed by the medium so far as normal methods of acquisition went; on the other hand, the spirit theory was rather discounted by the fact that the French doctor spoke no more French than Mrs. Piper herself might be supposed to know. Some sort of tapping of the sitters' minds, or of some distant persons' minds, therefore seemed a possible explanation, Dr. Phinuit being regarded as a secondary personality or fraction or dream self of the medium. Professor James never reached any settled convictions as to which of the two hypotheses was the true one, and his attitude was indicated when he said: "In the trances of this medium [Mrs. Piper] I cannot resist the conviction that knowledge appears which she has never gained by the ordinary waking use of her eyes and ears and wits. What the

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. vi., pp. 651-9.

source of this knowledge may be I know not, and have not the glimmer of an explanatory suggestion to make; but from admitting the fact of such knowledge, I can see no escape."[1] As to Mrs. Piper's integrity, Professor James says, after having her to stay with his family on a visit, that he "learned to know her personally better than ever before, and had confirmed in me the belief that she is an absolutely simple and genuine person. No one, when challenged, can give 'evidence' to others for such beliefs as this. Yet we all live by them from day to day, and practically I should be willing now to stake as much money on Mrs. Piper's honesty as on that of anyone I know, and am quite satisfied to leave my reputation for wisdom or folly, so far as human nature is concerned, to stand or fall by this declaration."[2]

In 1887 Mrs. Piper came under the supervision of Dr. Richard Hodgson, who sent or took many people to her, often taking notes himself. In the winter of 1889-90 she came to England and gave sittings in Liverpool, Cambridge, and London, to Sir Oliver Lodge, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Dr. Walter Leaf, and others, many sitters being introduced anonymously. There was a mixture of success and failure, but most of the investigators reached conclusions similar to those of Professor James. "Professor Lodge, Mr. Leaf, and myself [F. W. H. Myers], who are editing the records, have no theory which we wish to impose upon the reader. On certain external or preliminary points, as will be seen, not we three alone, but all who have had adequate opportunity of judgment,

[1] Presidential address to the S.P.R., "Proceedings," vol. xii., pp. 5-6. Later, though never quite committing himself, Professor James came very near acceptance of the spiritist explanation. He regarded it as at least a tenable hypothesis, to be treated seriously.

[2] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. vi., p. 654.

are decisively agreed. But on the more delicate and interesting question as to the origin of the trance-utterances we cannot unite in any absolute view. We agree only in maintaining that the utterances show that knowledge has been acquired by some intelligence in some supernormal fashion; and in urging on experimental psychologists the duty of watching for similar cases, and of analysing the results in some such way as we have endeavoured to do." [1] Sittings are reported at great length, and, granting honesty and ordinary intelligence on the part of the investigators—which no one will deny,—it is clear that the conclusion of the three editors is fully justified.

From 1884 to 1891 the communicating intelligence, purporting to be Dr. Phinuit, gave his messages by speech, the medium being in trance but not at all immobile. She could stand up and would put her thumbs, man-like, where her waistcoat arm-holes would have been if she had had them. Early in 1892, however, automatic writing in trance began, under the supervision of "George Pelham" ("G. P."), a young lawyer who had been known to Dr. Hodgson and who had met his death by a fall in New York in February, 1892, at the age of thirty-two years. Dr. Phinuit still occasionally communicated by the voice, but by far the best evidence was received through the writing. Dr. Hodgson, who was now exercising a very close supervision of Mrs. Piper's phenomena, introduced before the date of his next report a hundred and fifty different persons, all anonymously or pseudonymously. Omitting two cases which we will return to later, thirty people out of these hundred and fifty were persons known in life to G. P. All these thirty were recognised by the spirit G. P., their names

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. vi., p. 436.

were given, either surname or Christian name or full name, and in each case the proper degree of intimacy was shown. The two doubtful cases just referred to were those of a Mrs. M. and a Miss Warner. G. P. said he had met Mrs. M., but the latter did not remember it. There is reason to believe, however, that a meeting had occurred, and it is not surprising that the lady had forgotten. Miss Warner, whom he had known slightly, G. P. failed to recognise at first; but he had known her only as a girl, and the sitting was five years afterwards, when she had grown up; the non-recognition was therefore natural enough. Of all the remaining hundred odd who had not known G. P. in life, the spirit G. P. showed no knowledge.[1]

All this means that if G. P. was a subliminal fraction of Mrs. Piper and no real G. P. was concerned at all, that fraction could somehow tell who was and who was not acquainted with a man whom Mrs. Piper herself had not known—for he had met her only once, under an assumed name. In other words, the supposed fragment possessed knowledge *characteristic of G. P.*, for no other person could have picked out G. P.'s friends so accurately. Much other evidence concerning other communicators is given by Dr. Hodgson in his excellent report here cited, and to it students must be referred. Until 1891 Dr. Hodgson had inclined to a secondary personality theory of the phenomena, but after a few years of the G. P. régime he expressed himself as in favour of a spiritualistic interpretation. He remarks that he was familiar with the results of over five hundred sittings, a hundred and thirty of them being for first sitters, so his conclusions were based on a large mass of data.

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xiii., p. 328.

In 1896 Mrs. Piper's mediumship entered on a third phase, new controls appearing, calling themselves "Imperator," "Rector," etc. These names, as we have seen (p. 63), figure in the Stainton Moses communications, and the natural inference is that these new controls purported to be the same spirits as Stainton Moses' old controls, though there was not seemingly any definite claim to that effect. Certain it is that the real names given at times through Mrs. Piper as those borne by these spirits in life, do not tally with the names given through Stainton Moses. Whatever these personalities were, they took charge of the medium and announced a change in the procedure. Indiscriminate sittings were to be for the most part dropped, and a new sort of evidence was to be attempted. Professor Hyslop of Columbia University (Chair of Logic and Ethics) was permitted to carry out a long series of sittings which completely convinced him of the agency of his deceased father,[1] but this was almost the last of the old order. Whether the new evidence has fulfilled the promises made is a matter of opinion; Mrs. Piper's health certainly improved under the new régime, and some curious evidential results have been obtained; but they are very difficult to assess. The most important feature, excluding the cross-correspondences with which we shall deal later, was the appearance of classical matter presumably unknown to the medium. The following is a digest of one of the incidents in question:

At a sitting of March 23rd, 1908, Mr. G. B. Dorr asked F. W. H. Myers, who had died in 1901 and purported to be communicating: "What does the word Lethe suggest to you?" In the disjointed answers which followed, reference was made but not understood, to "sad lovely

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xvi.

mate," "entwined love," "beautiful shores," a lady with half a hoop (who turned out to be Iris with her bow) and other classical things. At the next sitting the day following it was said that "Myers feels a little distressed because he thinks you did not quite understand his replies to your last question," and further references were made to a "Cave, Mor, MOR, Latin for sleep," and "CYX" with an indication that something came between the first two letters. In the sitting of March 30th, 1908, among other matter, Mr. Myers said "No poppies ever grew on Elysian shores."

Mr. Dorr could make no sense of all this, further than thinking that the reference to the Cave of Sleep was probably due to association of ideas between the oblivion of sleep and the oblivion produced by the waters of Lethe. But later, the untiring industry of Mr. J. G. Piddington (of the London S.P.R.) discovered that the details made up a perfectly clear allusion to the story of Ceyx and Alcyone in Book II. of Ovid's "Metamorphoses," which has striking references to Iris and the Cave of Sleep, before the entrance to which grew poppies, on the banks of the Cimmerian river Lethe.[1]

Neither Mrs. Piper nor Mr. Dorr had read any Ovid, and Mr. Piddington makes out a very strong case for disbelieving that the knowledge allusively shown could have been derived from books quoting Ovidian stories. Of course in such cases everything depends on the details, and these cannot be quoted in full here; students must consult the volume referred to. And it must be remembered that this incident, here briefly and inadequately sketched, is only one of several similar ones, all difficult or impossible to explain normally, for Mrs. Piper has no acquaintance

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxiv., pp. 87 and following.

with the classics. Mr. Myers, who in most of these cases purports to be the communicator or supervisor, was of course a classical scholar of the first rank, and the communications are entirely in keeping with the claim made, if we allow for presumable difficulties which interfere with fluent and coherent communication, introducing a certain amount of disjointedness and fragmentariness.

As to the manner of the trance, in the Phinuit days Mrs. Piper sat upright in her chair, though with head somewhat bowed, and eyes closed. In the G. P. and "Imperator" régime the medium's head rested on a cushion, face turned away, and all activity was centred in the writing hand, which could also gesticulate in very meaningful fashion, Sir Oliver Lodge remarking that "it was full of intelligence, and could be described as more like an intelligent person than a hand."[1] The duration of a Phinuit sitting was about an hour, and Mrs. Piper would often give two sittings a day; but it was thought wise to reduce the frequency to two or three sittings a week, though they sometimes lasted two hours, the writing seeming to be less of a drain on the medium's strength than the talking had been. In the later days the trance came on more easily, and practically at will, when conditions were made right. After the trance there was usually half an hour or so of a slightly dazed state before complete normality was reached, and Mrs. Piper would often utter ejaculations about the bright and happy state she had left, and about the dark and dingy world she had come back to—even on a bright sunny day. Sometimes during this period of recovery she could pick out of a number of photographs a person, unknown to her in life, who had been purporting to communicate; but this was

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxiii., p. 131.

possible only for a half-hour or so after the trance, for memory was only dimly brought over, and faded rapidly.

Mrs. Piper's trances have now ceased, and practically the only supernormal feature of her life is an occasional piece of automatic writing, usually from Mr. Myers or other member of the S.P.R. group on the other side, and generally evidential in some more or less important way. It seems usual for mediumship to tail off in this way after middle age is reached, the supernormal power being at its best when the physical health and strength are at their maximum in early or early middle life.

It may reasonably be objected by the sceptic that Mrs. Piper was a professional medium and that her phenomena are therefore suspect. But elaborate precautions were taken, as described, in introducing sitters anonymously, and other measures were taken, such as having Mr. and Mrs. Piper shadowed by detectives in order to ascertain whether they went about making inquiries. The result was that nothing in the least suspicious was ever discovered, and that the investigators were completely satisfied that the explanation, whatever it was, was certainly not to be found in normally acquired knowledge. But it is inevitable that a certain doubt should linger in the mind when the financial element enters at all; and it is therefore very desirable that this element should be eliminated as far as possible. Fortunately a number of people in England developed psychic powers—people against whom the accusation of fraud for money's sake could not be brought—and were willing to exercise their power for the benefit of science. We owe much to these people, who have had to bear the cheap sneers of ignorant dogmatists and the pain of having their names and results

fought over like Patroclus' body, among the upholders of this or that theory. They are among the martyrs of science, and one hopes they will have their reward.

One of the most important English non-professional sensitives was Mrs. Thompson. This lady, born in 1868, the daughter of a Birmingham architect, and married in 1886 to a business man in London, was well known to Mr. Myers, and was not, and never had been, a professional medium. She was "an active, vigorous, practical person; interested in her household and her children, and in the ordinary amusements of young English ladies, as bicycling, the theatre. She is not of morbid, nor even of specially reflective or religious temperament. No one would think of her as the possessor of supernormal gifts."[1]

Mrs. Thompson frequently saw spirits, also pictures symbolising things happening at a distance (usually seen in a crystal) or even premonitory of something in the future. She also got automatic writing. But the most important feature was trance speech, somewhat in the manner of Mrs. Piper's early days. Entry into and emergence from the trance was swift and easy, very much as in natural sleep. After a successful sitting there was a feeling of rest and refreshment, sometimes developing into unusual peace and joy; and the trances seemed to have a markedly beneficial effect on Mrs. Thompson's health. The chief control was "Nelly," purporting to be a child of Mrs. Thompson's who had died when a baby, and "Mrs. Cartwright," a former schoolmistress of Mrs. Thompson's. Mr. Myers introduced many people who were unknown to the medium and about whose affairs he himself knew little or nothing; and in many cases they received convincing evidence of the agency of their

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xvii., p. 70. (Myers's account.)

deceased friends or relatives. A few illustrative incidents may be described.

Dr. Frederick van Eeden, of Bussum, Holland, introduced without name or address, took a piece of clothing that had belonged to a young man whom he had known and who had committed suicide by shooting. The medium, or rather the control, gave an exact description of him and of a friend of his, with several correct names. Further, the medium's voice became hoarse, and a peculiar little cough appeared, both of which represented facts, for the young man had suffered from these as the result of an attempt at suicide by cutting his throat, from which he had recovered. Some correct Dutch words were spoken (Mrs. Thompson did not know Dutch), Dr. van Eeden's full name was given, with "Bussum" and "Netherlands," and statements were made which were unknown to Dr. van Eeden but which were found to be correct on inquiry in Holland—telepathy from the sitter's mind thus being excluded. A few things said were wrong, but these were so few and unimportant, and the correct things were so striking and numerous, that coincidence was an unacceptable explanation. Dr. van Eeden said, eight months after his last sitting and when he had had time to study the notes thoroughly: "It is impossible for me to abstain from the conviction that I have really been a witness, were it only for a few minutes, of the voluntary manifestation of a deceased person."[1]

Mrs. A. W. Verrall, then Classical Lecturer at Newnham, also had many successful sittings, and one series which she reported, concerning some sitters known to her, is particularly striking. A certain dead lady purported to be communicating through "Nelly," and she told a number

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xvii., p. 84. (Van Eeden's account.)

of facts to first one and then another sitter, all of them true and all of them known to the dead lady. Some of them were known to the sitters, some were not; in this latter case telepathy from the sitters was excluded, but telepathy from some distant person might be conjectured.[1] But in one instance she gave a fact which apparently was not known to any living person—namely, a reference to a recipe for "pomatum" which would be found in a recipe book of hers. The book was discovered, was found to be written in from both ends, and carefully indexed. No reference to pomatum was found in the index; but on examination it was found that the last five entries in the middle of the book had not been indexed, and one of them was a recipe for making Dr. Somebody's pomade—which, by the way, was always referred to by the dead lady as "pomatum." "If such experiences as these were numerous," says Mrs. Verrall, "it would be difficult to avoid inferring that the source of information is to be found rather in the one consciousness that knew all the events than in the scattered consciousnesses which can, after all, not supply the whole."[2]

CROSS-CORRESPONDENCES AND EVIDENCE OF CLASSICAL KNOWLEDGE IN THE SCRIPTS OF ENGLISH NON-CLASSICAL AUTOMATISTS

Mr. Myers had frequently discussed, during his lifetime, the idea of getting the same message through different sensitives contemporaneously, and something of the sort did as a matter of fact come about soon after his death on

[1] Admittedly it is a rather wild conjecture. Experimental telepathy, in which a strong effort of *will* is made, is a fact; but this is very different from supposing that the minds of distant and unknown persons can be read. These persons are not trying to transmit anything, and often they are not aware of the medium's existence.

[2] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xvii., pp. 181-2-3.

January 17th, 1901. Sir Oliver and Lady Lodge, receiving communications through Mrs. Thompson from a *soi-disant* Myers on May 8th, 1901, between 9 and 10.30 P.M., were told that "someone is calling me now," and in Mrs. Verrall's script, produced in Cambridge on the same evening between 10 and 10.30, a Myers communicator appeared, saying: "Doing something else to-night. Note hour."[1] There was also a certain amount of correspondence between some Sidgwick communications (Professor Sidgwick had died in August, 1900) received through Mrs. Thompson in London and Miss Rawson in the South of France. But the matter soon developed a much greater complexity, and several volumes of the "Proceedings" are devoted to reports and discussions. A few illustrations, condensed and very inadequate, must here suffice.

Mrs. Holland, an English lady living in India, had occasionally practised automatic writing from 1893, with evidential results, but did not take it very seriously or send her scripts to the S.P.R. until 1903, after reading Mr. Myers's book, "Human Personality and its Survival of Bodily Death." She had not known Mr. Myers or the S.P.R. group, but messages began to come ostensibly from them, notably one from Mr. Myers referring to a text, "1 Cor. xvi. 13" ("Watch ye, stand fast in the faith, quit you like men, be strong"), saying also: "I am unable to make your hand form Greek characters, and so I cannot give the text as I wish, only the reference." This text had a special significance, for it is inscribed in Greek over the gateway of Selwyn College, Cambridge, and Mr. Myers had remarked to Mrs. Verrall on the inscription's omission of a mute letter. Mrs. Holland had never been in Cam-

[1] Sir Oliver's "Survival of Man," p. 300, and "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xx., pp. 207 and following.

bridge, and knew nothing about the text being on a college gateway. Her script had also given Mrs. Verrall's address, 5, Selwyn Gardens, Cambridge, which she did not normally know, and, as was afterwards found, there were many indications that the scripts of Mrs. Holland and Mrs. Verrall were being influenced by the same agency, claiming in each case to be F. W. H. Myers.[1] And a good deal of this occurred before the two ladies made each other's acquaintance.

But such incidents as these could be hypothetically accounted for by telepathy, and a scheme seems to have been devised by those on the other side to circumvent this, by sending messages incomprehensible in themselves to each automatist, but which made sense when put together, like a jig-saw puzzle. On March 2nd, 1906, Mrs. Verrall's script contained, in Latin:

"Not with such help will you find what you want; not with such help, nor with those defenders of yours." ("Æneid," ii. 521, Hecuba to Priam when he put on armour in the vain hope of saving Troy.)

"First among his peers, himself not unmindful of his name; with him a brother related in feeling, though not in blood. Both these will send a word to you through another woman. After some days you will easily understand what I say; till then farewell."

On March 4th came: "Pagan and Pope. The Stoic persecutor and the Christian. Gregory not Basil's friend ought to be a clue, but you have it not quite right. Pagan and Pope and Reformer all enemies as you think. (In Latin.) The Cross has a meaning. The Cross-bearer who one day is borne. The standard-bearer is a link."

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxi., pp. 221-38.

On March 5th, in Latin: "The club-bearer (or key-bearer, *claviger*), with the lion's skin already well described before this in the writings. Some things are to be corrected. Ask your husband, he knows it well. There stand the columns, where Calpe has been left. That is the end. No, you have left out something. The columns (broken) by incessant reading."

All this made no sense to Mrs. Verrall, except, of course, that she recognised the Virgilian line in the script of March 2nd. Dr. Verrall, to whom she showed the script on March 2nd, said that he saw a connection between the two Latin passages, and on March 4th, when he saw the script of that day, he saw evidence of the same intention in "Pagan and Pope," etc. The fact was that the scripts had reminded him of Raphael's picture of Attila terrified by the vision of St. Peter and St. Paul, when meeting Pope Leo, who went out to save Rome. The line about Priam suggested the weak defence of a besieged city. Pagan and Pope are Attila and Leo. In the picture (in the Vatican at Rome) the Cross-bearer rides on the left of the Pope. In the background is the city, with the Coliseum and aqueducts. It will be noted that a word was to come through another woman, and on March 11th Mrs. Verrall received a copy of some March 7th script of Mrs. Holland's containing the words: "Ave, Roma immortalis" (Hail, Immortal Rome). "Could I make it any clearer without giving her the clue?"[1]

I have omitted some details, and to form an opinion the case must be studied in full in the "Proceedings," where many other similar but still more complex cases are given, impossible to summarise. The same remark applies to some curious classical puzzles received through the

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxi., pp. 297-302.

mediumship of another non-professional sensitive, Mrs. Willett; e.g., "The Ear of Dionysius," in which bits came through at different times, making up in total a full reference, most ingeniously split up, to the poet Philoxenes and his imprisonment at Syracuse. This purported to come from two Greek scholars, the late Professors Butcher and Verrall, and there are points which certainly seem to indicate knowledge beyond what is possessed by ordinary readers. On the other hand, it is difficult or impossible to estimate satisfactorily the amount of knowledge that anyone possesses *subliminally,* and some of the S.P.R. investigators may underestimate Mrs. Willett's. She is said to have been unacquainted with the story of Ulysses and the Cyclops; but it is difficult to believe that she has never read such a well-known thing, and it is surprising that it is not present to her supraliminal memory, for she is well read and fond of poetry. And a knowledge of these old stories is not necessarily dependent on a reading of even Homer or Ovid; the Polyphemus and Galatea affair —referred to in the "Ear of Dionysius" communications —is contained in Handel's *Acis and Galatea,* and many other derivative places. In another case the evidential quality depended on whether Mrs. Willett had read a certain article by Dr. Verrall on "The Baptism of Statius" in the *Albany Review.* To Mr. G. W. Balfour this seemed unlikely, for he had never even heard of the *Albany Review.* But to those who did know that magazine and had read the article in question, this assumption of Mrs. Willett's ignorance may seem hasty and uncritical. The magazine was a fairly popular literary thing, and non-classical scholars like the present writer had taken it regularly and, indeed, written in it. It seems quite a likely publication to have been seen by Mrs. Willett or anyone else of her literary leanings.

But it must be admitted that though, in certain cases, there is a danger of the supposed ignorance of non-classical automatists being overestimated, there are other cases in which it is difficult to believe that the knowledge shown either is, or ever was, possessed by the person writing. We need to be critical and to keep the standard high, not accepting too easily an automatist's statement just because she happens to be a non-professional; for we have subliminal memory to deal with, and that is more difficult to exclude than ordinary fraud. But it is possible to exclude it satisfactorily in some cases, as in the G. P. evidence.

As for the cross-correspondences, they may perhaps be hypothetically accounted for by the supposition that the subliminals of all the automatists concerned are in collusion and engineering a huge deception telepathically. The idea attributes a disturbing immorality to "subliminals," but we know that these mental levels have not the same moral standards as our supraliminal consciousness. In sleep we do things which our waking selves would not, and feel no compunction. And though this idea of deception by automatists' subliminals is unpleasant, it may only lead to a wider truth. We might say that the universe deceived us about the relation of earth, sun, moon, and stars, until Copernicus and his followers found out the truth. We have to learn; and the faith of science is that it is worth while. But those who have investigated most thoroughly are of opinion that the cross-correspondences and the classical puzzles are *not* due to subliminal deception. They are, on the contrary, convinced that the spiritistic explanation is to be preferred as the more reasonable.

Another theory that has been suggested is that we get what we seek. I once introduced a sensitive to the study of Fechner's philosophy, which greatly fascinated her.

While writing to me on the subject, a "deep inner voice began chanting a song," which she wrote down. The first stanza runs as follows:

> Through the vault of the skies I tread,
> Their glory around me is spread;
> With my whole living Face
> Turned to Heaven, I pace
> The void of all Space.

Clearly this is Fechner's Earth-Spirit that is talking. An automatist can perhaps turn on any one of a number of taps, according to his or her mood of the moment or the kind of stimulus supplied. It is somewhat like the pliability of the hypnotised subject, who declaims like Gladstone or Irving, or prays like Spurgeon, according as he is told that he is this or that person.

But, after all, the analogy does not fit very well. The *evidence* calls for explanation. We can provide conditions, so far as we understand what is required, but the real initiative or push comes from elsewhere, some "other side." Even if it urged that we seek evidential messages in general, it is still true that in particular they often are of quite unexpected character. We get different details from what we are seeking. An outside mind seems a reasonable supposition.

For those who determinedly reject the idea of spirit-communication there is a possible hypothesis—quite sensible and tenable, and I for one have no wish to force belief in any theory—that the phenomena are allowed by Providence to occur occasionally, in order to save us from a blank and erroneous materialism; but that the cause is not personal spirits as alleged, but a leakage down of the general supersensible or superphysical world, which runs into human shapes to our perceptions. The idea does not commend itself to me as a satisfactory theory, for,

after all, it is only a surmise; and, arguing from analogy, as in all science we do, it seems unlikely that the spiritual world is a mass of general mind-stuff, so to speak. Our present world is a world of individual objects, individual human beings; and there seems no reason why the next world should not be similar. And, if so, there will be individual human spirits. And some of our messages may be from them, as claimed, even though mixed up with various confusing elements due to difficulty of transmission.

Here, perhaps, may be mentioned two recent books which, while not being official S.P.R. publications, are by leading members of that Society, and are of the evidential order. "Raymond: On Life and Death," by Sir Oliver Lodge, is a deeply touching memorial to a son of exceptional ability and character, killed in Flanders in September, 1915. There had been a warning from Sir Oliver's friend, F. W. H. Myers, through Mrs. Piper, wrapped up in a classical allusion to the falling tree which was so nearly fatal to the poet Horace, and, after the blow fell, Myers seemed to constitute himself a second father, on the other side, to the son of his old friend. Sir Oliver and members of his family received many evidential and comforting messages from Raymond through Mrs. Leonard, Mr. A. V. Peters, and other mediums; notably some concerning a photograph of which nothing was known by the sitters, but which turned out to have been taken near the front, as described.

The book, having such a wide appeal in these days of universal mourning, and being the first book of its kind to be published by a scientific man of the first rank, created great interest, and became a storm-centre of controversy, no doubt with much resultant pain to the family which unselfishly gave to the world such tenderly human and in-

timate converse, in the hope—amply fulfilled—of comforting others similarly afflicted. This is not the place, nor am I the person, to reply to its critics. But two things may be said: (1) Sir Oliver Lodge does not claim that the book gives the best evidence yet obtained; it is evidence concerning one special person, and cannot be as strong as, e.g., the mass of evidence obtained through Mrs. Piper; (2) Sir Oliver's convictions do not rest solely on the evidence in "Raymond," nor were they newly arrived at under stress of natural grief after his loss. The fact is that Sir Oliver was slowly driven from a position of agnosticism, first by telepathic experiments thirty years ago, later by sittings with Mrs. Piper and other mediums, some of them non-professional. In his "Survival of Man," published in 1909, he refers to his "conviction of man's survival of bodily death—a conviction based on a large range of natural facts" (Preface, vii.), and says, later: "Not easily or early do we make this admission. In spite of long conversations with what purported to be the surviving intelligence of these friends and investigators (namely, deceased S.P.R. workers, notably Gurney, Myers, and Hodgson), we were by no means convinced of their identity by mere general conversation—even when of a friendly and intimate character, such as in normal cases would be considered amply and overwhelmingly sufficient for the identification of friends speaking, let us say, through a telephone or a typewriter. We required definite and crucial proof—a proof difficult even to imagine as well as difficult to supply.

"The ostensible communicators realise the need of such proof just as fully as we do, and have done their best to satisfy the rational demand (i.e., by the cross-correspondences and classical messages). Some of us think they have succeeded" (p. 336).

Similar statements were made, carefully phrased and weightily uttered, in Sir Oliver's Presidential Address before the British Association for the Advancement of Science in 1913,[1] and also elsewhere; but without further references I trust it is sufficiently clear that Sir Oliver's opinions were established, by long-continued experiment and study, before the occurrence of the catastrophe to which we owe the book in question.

The other volume to which I have referred is Sir William Barrett's "On the Threshold of the Unseen." Sir William has a very special and long record in psychic things, for he brought telepathy to the notice of the British Association in 1876, and is the only surviving founder of the S.P.R. In this very instructive and readable volume he describes many of his own experiences with sensitives—all non-professionals—and he has been particularly fortunate in obtaining raps and other physical phenomena under excellent conditions. Also he has had very good identity-evidence through the ouija-writing of friends; in one case a characteristic message from Sir Hugh Lane, who went down with the *Lusitania,* though none of those present at the sitting knew that he was on the vessel at all.

Sir William is convinced of the survival of man, and that intelligences possibly of many grades exist around us in the unseen:

> Millions of spiritual creatures walk the earth,
> Both when we wake and when we sleep.

Milton was a poet; but Sir William Barrett and other psychical researchers would agree that his insight was not only poetic, but also literally true and completely in accord with the latest findings of science.

[1] Published in the small volume "Continuity" (Dent).

CHAPTER VIII

PHYSICAL PHENOMENA

THE line between the "physical phenomena" of spiritualism and the psychical phenomena is rather arbitrary, for the two are a good deal mixed up. Strictly, the physical phenomena are those in which matter is demonstrably moved or at least influenced in some supernormal way, as when an untouched table rises into the air or raps come in its substance, a jar being perhaps felt, though no general movement; or when matter is produced apparently out of nothing—though probably abstracted from the sitters or medium or both—as in alleged materialisations. But some phenomena are just on the edge, as, for instance, poltergeist happenings,[1] in which matter is not visibly moved; in most such happenings, however, it is.

The best-known case is, perhaps, the haunting of John Wesley's paternal home, the Epworth parsonage in Lincolnshire. For two months, December, 1716, and January, 1717, the most extraordinary noises were heard in various parts of the house, and no cause was ever discovered. Knocks, creaks, and crashes as of broken crockery were heard by many of the family, and we have accounts written out by four eye-witnesses (or ear-witnesses) very soon after the occurrences. Nothing seems to have been actually broken, and not much was observed in the way of objects moving without visible cause; Mr. Wesley's trencher

[1] German *poltern*, to be noisy or throw things about. A poltergeist is a noisy spirit, but not necessarily a visible one.

"danced upon the table" without anyone touching it, but that was about all, except the apparent lifting of door-latches. It may be possible to explain some of the happenings as trickery worked by some revengeful rustic, for the Wesleys were not popular, and Mr. Wesley had preached against the superstitious recourse to local "cunning men," presumably supposed clairvoyants. But the dancing trencher and some of the other phenomena are not easily explainable on this hypothesis. For instance, Mr. Wesley was three times pushed by something invisible, so we have at least to add hallucination to the supposed trickery.[1] Mr. Podmore's suggestion of trickery by Hetty Wesley, mainly on the ground that the raps sometimes seemed to follow her about, may be dismissed as unlikely, for some of the phenomena happened when she was nowhere near. It may be that she was the unconscious medium, for it is observed that raps occur supernormally in the presence of certain people, though the process is not yet understood.

Intelligence is usually shown, and a code may elicit messages; but in the Wesley case nothing definite was obtained, apparently no code being tried. The Wesleys called the ghost "Old Jeffery," and treated him as a joke as far as possible, though he caused them so much broken sleep that he was less of a joke than a nuisance. The family were often kept up nearly all night, Mr. and Mrs. Wesley frequently perambulating in search of some cause, and this, in the small hours of December and January mornings, and in a house not fitted with modern appliances for heating, would be a far from amusing occupation.[2]

[1] "The Epworth Phenomena," collated by Dudley Wright. (London: Rider, 1917.)

[2] These haunts are ubiquitous. Mrs. Poole describes similar experiences in their house in Cairo ("An Englishwoman in Egypt"). *Cf.* "A

But in the best poltergeist cases there is visible movement of matter. For instance, in an outbreak at Worksop in 1883, basins and other objects floated about, often in an undulating way which is reminiscent of the behaviour of things in the presence of D. D. Home and other mediums; crockery to the value of £9 was smashed; and no cause was discovered. Mr. Podmore, of the S.P.R., cross-examined six of the eleven eye-witnesses separately, all intelligent and apparently honest people, and the accounts agreed in all essentials. He also examined the house, in daylight, and "could discern no holes in the walls or ceilings, nor any trace of the extensive or elaborate machinery which would have been required to produce the movements by ordinary mechanical means."[1]

Another curious outbreak occurred a few years later at Swanland, near Hull, in a carpenter's shop. Pieces of wood sailed about, or hopped along, two feet or so at a stride, sometimes hitting one or other of the three men working there. Each thought at first that one of the others was playing tricks, but all were soon convinced that this was not so. As in other cases, there was often the curious undulatory motion; "a piece would move as though borne alone on gently heaving waves," as one of the eye-witnesses said. And they were never able to catch the objects while in motion; "every attempt so to do was eluded."[2]

Disturbed House and its Relief," by Ada M. Sharpe (London: Simpkin, Marshall, 1914). In this case the disturbances continued for three years, and seemed to be due to the spirit of a man who had fallen and been killed in the house while suffering from delirium tremens. Cure followed a priest's exorcism. The account is rather impressive.

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xii., p. 48.

[2] *Ibid.*, vol. vii., p. 385. Other cases in same volume: Articles by F. W. H. Myers, "On Alleged Movements of Objects, without Contact, occurring not in the Presence of a Paid Medium," pp. 146-98, 383-94.

It may perhaps be objected that in these cases the witnesses were not expert investigators or even well-educated people. But it is not always so. Professor Cesare Lombroso investigated a poltergeist which troubled the occupants of a wine store at 6, Via Bava, Turin, in 1900, and saw for himself. Bottles rolled about or lifted themselves out of the racks and fell, breaking on the floor, in a good light (six candles), and after careful examination for string or other means of trickery. Professor Lombroso noted, moreover, as other observers have done, the peculiarity of the movements; bottles did not fall with normal suddenness, "but as though carried by someone."[1] The phenomena ceased when a boy employed in the store was sent away, and a hasty critic might assume trickery on his part. But the boy was not in the cellar when Professor Lombroso carried out his investigations. There seems reason to suppose that these occurrences are generally due, at least partly, to the presence of young people, perhaps because of their great vitality. If we look on a human body as a reservoir of life-force which during growth is rapidly increasing in capacity and taking in that force from higher sources, we may perhaps conceive of an overflow, so to speak, if the enlargement of capacity does not proceed at an even rate, while the downrush of "force" continues. This overflow may then manifest as physical force outside the person's body, as it would have manifested as physical force inside it—increased strength—if there had been no check. This suggestion is, of course, no more than a vague guess. It does, however, enable us to visualise a possible "animation" which would render these supernormal activities of non-living matter less incredible.[2]

[1] Report in "Annales des Sciences Psychiques."

[2] Professor Henri Bergson's doctrine that "consciousness overflows the organism" (Presidential Address, S.P.R., "Proceedings," vol. xxvii.,

This same just-mentioned peculiarity of motion was observed in a Cheriton poltergeist in the autumn of 1917, when a dug-out as refuge in air-raids was being made in a garden. Stones, even up to several pounds in weight, "went for" one of the men, who was badly bruised. The stones were seen to lift themselves an inch or two, then fall back; then a few inches, and again a fall; then they would get up properly and sail at the man as if he were a magnet. Unfortunately, though Sir William Barrett and Sir A. Conan Doyle visited the place, catechised the witnesses, and satisfied themselves that something unusual had occurred, the actual phenomena were not seen by an expert. But the details render hypotheses of trickery, marsh gas, etc., quite unacceptable as full explanation.

In such cases there is, of course, no sufficient inherent reason to attribute the phenomena to spirits. Intelligence is certainly indicated sometimes, as when movements occur just after a sceptical remark, the impression being given that this was understood and resented. In one case the person speaking was immediately bombarded, and his conversion promptly followed. Whether this appearance of intelligence is accidental, the thing being really due to mechanical agencies not yet understood, or whether the objects are somehow temporarily animated by sub-human and frisky intelligences or fragments of the world-soul, or whether they are thrown by human or other spirits—which is rendered unlikely by the observed mode of motion —we cannot tell.

But in mediumistic cases the same kind of thing is certainly associated with spiritist claims. The phenomena

p. 171) is in accord with this guess, though he is not applying it to physical phenomena. And if the unincarnated portion of a living person's mind can temporarily animate portions of matter, so also may minds now wholly discarnate.

are usually stated to be additional proofs of the presence of external intelligent agencies, who give identity-tests and religious teaching by trance speech or writing. We have already mentioned the cases of D. D. Home and Stainton Moses, and we now come to the famous Neapolitan peasant woman who undoubtedly had very great powers of physical mediumship.

Eusapia Palladino (1854-1918) came of poor Italian peasant parents, and had no education, never learning to read or to write more than her own name. She became servant in a family given to spiritualistic practices, and, being called one day to make up the circle at a séance, was found to possess power. Several well-known people investigated and were convinced, including Professor Lombroso (in 1891), who, from strong scepticism, was converted to belief in at least the non-fraudulent character of the occurrences.

In 1892 seventeen sittings were held in Milan by a committee including Professor Schiaparelli, Director of the Astronomical Observatory of Milan; Professor Richet, Professor of Physiology in Paris; Carl du Prel, Ph.D., of Munich; Angelo Brofferio, Professor of Philosophy, and three physicists—Professor Gerosa and Drs. Ermacora and Finzi. Levitations of the table occurred in full light; also inexplicable movements of other objects, and alteration of the medium's weight; while, in darkness or semi-darkness, hands appeared and touched the sitters. The committee decided that none of the phenomena occurring in the light could have been done by trickery, and that this was true of many of the others.[1]

In 1893-4 forty sittings were held in Warsaw by Dr.

1 "Annales des Sciences Psychiques," 1893, pp. 1-31, 39-64. Criticism by Mr. Podmore in "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. ix., p. 218.

Ochorowicz, who was convinced of the supernormality of the phenomena. But some of his colleagues were not, and the series must be considered inconclusive.

In 1894 Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. F. W. H. Myers took part in experiments at Professor Richet's invitation, on the Île Roubaud, in the Mediterranean, and Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick collaborated soon afterwards. No fraud was discovered, and several of the investigators favoured a supernormal theory, but the conditions did not admit of complete certainty being reached.

In 1895 Eusapia gave twenty-one sittings at Cambridge, and Dr. Richard Hodgson showed clearly that trickery was used, mainly in substitution of hands and feet. But it must be mentioned that the holding was intentionally lax, in order that the fraudulent methods might be observed and studied, and it seems that an honest medium, in trance or some abnormal state, may follow the line of least resistance and produce phenomena in ordinary muscular ways when that is possible. It is only fair to Eusapia to say that she always asked to be well held, in order that this might be avoided. And practically all the investigators, except those of the Cambridge group who had not had good sittings elsewhere, became convinced that after every allowance for the use of normal muscular action, there was evidence for the exertion of force in some supernormal way. Among the voluminous reports and discussions on Eusapia between 1895 and 1907 may be mentioned Professor Flammarion's "Les Forces Naturelles Inconnues," the two-volume work, "Psicologia e Spiritismo," by Enrico Morselli, Professor of Pathology in the University of Genoa, the report by Dr. Courtier in the *Bulletin de l'Institut Général Psychologique* of Paris, which covers experiments extending over

three years, and the report by Professor Bottazzi, Professor of Physiology in the University of Naples (résumé in *Annales des Sciences Psychiques*, August—November, 1907).

It was felt, however, that an investigation ought to be carried out, not only by scientific men, but by experts in conjuring and trickery. Accordingly the S.P.R. appointed a committee which should fulfil these conditions, and a series of sittings was held in Naples in 1908. The investigators were three. Mr. W. W. Baggally was an old hand at amateur conjuring and investigation of "physical phenomena," and a member of the S.P.R. Council. He had sat with practically all the English physical "mediums" since the days of D. D. Home, and had never found anything that could not, in his opinion, be accounted for by trickery. Mr. Hereward Carrington had reached similarly negative conclusions, after ten years of investigation in America; all the things he saw he could imitate, and in many cases could improve on the methods. His large book, "The Physical Phenomena of Spiritualism," gives a full description of the most famous "phenomena." Apart from "mediumistic" trickery he is an extremely clever amateur conjurer. The Hon. E. Feilding, though less of a specialist at conjuring proper, had had a large experience of fraudulent physical "mediums," and did not expect that the alleged phenomena would be found to be genuine in any case. All were young or in middle age; active and alert; quite capable, one would think, of holding and watching a stout Neapolitan peasant woman of fifty-four.

Their report of the eleven sittings is in "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxiii., pp. 309-569. The investigators occupied adjoining rooms at one of the principal hotels in

Naples, and the sittings were held in one of them and not at Eusapia's home or anywhere suggested by her. An English shorthand-writer took down the investigators' comments as things occurred. A cabinet was made by hanging thin black cashmere curtains across a corner of the room, and a few small objects were placed therein; namely, two tambourines, a guitar, a toy piano, a flageolet, and a small table. Another table was out in the room, for levitation phenomena and the like.

The amount of light varied, the medium or "control" sometimes asking for reduction or extinction. But it was not found that darkness assisted the phenomena. They seemed to depend more on the medium's mood. If she was in a good temper she allowed full light and any conditions, and the phenomena were then at their best. The séance table would rise a foot or so from the floor (after preliminary tiltings with medium's and sitters' hands on its upper surface) without anyone touching it, the medium's hands being meanwhile held by one or more of the investigators, either in her lap or above the table; and her feet were also watched. The light (electric) was sufficient for the reading of small print; and the table remained in the air several seconds.

Sometimes Eusapia would hold out her hand (held by one of the investigators) towards the curtain, which would then balloon out towards her in a round bulge. This also happened when one of the investigators held out his hand at her request. The bulge collapsed when touched. Noises inside the cabinet were frequent, the guitar-strings were plucked, the sounds synchronising with increased pressure or pinching by Eusapia of the hand of the investigator, thus indicating, as many other phenomena indicate, that there is often some connexion, though a

supernormal one, between muscular effort on the medium's part and the phenomena that occur. Sometimes the objects within the cabinet would be brought out and placed on the séance table by unascertainable means, and touches were felt as if by fingers, on the arms, shoulders, heads, etc., of the sitters, in good light, without visible cause. In the darkness of the cabinet a greater degree of materialisation was effected, and a hand with apparently living fingers could be felt through the curtain, Eusapia's hands being outside and fully visible. Sometimes a visible hand came from behind the curtain, carrying one of the objects placed there; and at other times a head would appear, while the medium was in full view and in a fair light. On two occasions a cold breeze was felt, apparently issuing from a place on the left of the medium's brow. All three investigators felt it, and it was not altered when one of them held his hand over her nose and mouth. This breeze has been noticed by other experimenters also.[1] And to show that fraud alone is an unsatisfactory theory, it must be mentioned that raps, and the ringing and movement of a bell in the cabinet, occurred when Eusapia was not there at all, but apparently as a result of her "fluid" or influence left behind after a visit.

The upshot was that the three investigators, previously sceptical, and by their experience and ability probably the best combination that the world could provide for such an inquiry, were convinced that some supernormal agency

[1] "These movements (and, indeed, I may say the same of every kind of phenomenon) are generally preceded by a peculiar cold air, sometimes amounting to a decided wind. I have had sheets of paper blown about by it, and a thermometer lowered several degrees. On some occasions . . . I have not detected any actual movement of the air, but the cold has been so intense that I could only compare it to that felt when the hand has been within a few inches of frozen mercury." (Crookes's "Researches," p. 86.)

was at work. As to the possibility of hallucination, which is duly discussed in the Report, this is improbable when a phenomenon is unexpected and is perceived at the same time by several people; moreover, at many sittings with Eusapia the hallucination theory has been disproved by photographs, the table being shown, for instance, suspended in the air without visible support.

As to ultimate causation, this is supposed to be the spirit "John King," but at some sittings, mainly with Continental investigators, there have been materialisations of deceased friends or relatives of the sitters, and more or less evidential messages have been given. This, however, goes beyond what can be said to be established. A properly cautious statement of the Eusapia case seems to be that in her presence there occurred inexplicable movements of objects, and other phenomena, in a fashion indicating intelligence, but that there is not enough evidence to justify a conclusion as to its nature.

The phenomenon of supernormal *raps* has been studied with special care by Dr. Joseph Maxwell of Bordeaux,[1] who was fortunate enough to be acquainted with good mediums for this particular phase. (He also sat frequently with Eusapia Palladino, and obtained levitation of the table without contact, movement of sitters' chairs, ballooning of the cabinet curtain, etc.) Raps were produced in broad daylight at distances up to nine or ten feet from the medium, and they varied in tone according to the material against which they were produced—table, door, screen, wall, etc. Also they were not confined to the séance-room;

[1] "Metapsychical Phenomena," London, 1905. The author is a doctor of medicine and also a lawyer—Deputy Attorney-General at the Court of Appeal, Bordeaux. I have myself heard good raps with a psychical friend (not a professional medium or even a spiritualist) who has other powers of "physical phenomena" kind.

they were heard almost anywhere if the medium was present, and were particularly loud before religious pictures in a picture-gallery. They spelt out messages by rapping at a given letter of the alphabet, and undoubted intelligence was shown. Dr. Maxwell, however, is not a spiritualist, and holds the hypothesis that the personation was either the medium's or some sitter's subliminal consciousness, or a composite and temporary entity made up of a fusion of such subliminals. This idea seems reasonable enough, particularly as some of the spirits announced themselves to be fairies! Still, the question remains open, and some of Dr. Maxwell's results certainly suggest very strongly the agency of deceased human beings.

Of recent investigation in the physical department the most noteworthy is the work of Dr. Crawford of Belfast—a doctor of science of Glasgow University and a practical engineer. He has been allowed to join a family circle (the Golighers') and to investigate scientifically, imposing his own conditions. There is no "professional" element, no payment whatever being made: the Golighers are earnest spiritualists who sit as a religious rite with hymns and prayers, and the force seems to be drawn partly from each member, though mainly from Miss Kathleen Goligher, who, however, is not in trance but wide awake and greatly interested in what is happening. Levitations of the table are obtained without contact, in a good light, and on one occasion Sir William Barrett sat on it while it was in the air, but could not force it to the ground. Loud raps and bangs are produced, and have been registered on a phonograph disc, thus proving their objectivity. Messages are given by the raps and the alphabet, and the invisible intelligences co-operate willingly and intelligently with the investigator. Dr. Crawford is now convinced that they are

human spirits, as claimed; and, as to the *modus,* he has propounded interesting "rod and cantilever" theories which suppose an extrusion of matter in some unknown form from medium and sitters. Indeed, he seems on the verge of linking up the two worlds, establishing a greater continuity than hitherto—thus greatly helping belief in these extraordinary things—by the discovery of some *tertium quid* which will enable us to bridge the gulf.[1]

Here we come to the much-debated phenomenon of materialisation, about which, however, I wish to say as little as possible. It seems to be rare, and I have not seen it for myself. The accounts of partial materialisations in the presence of Eusapia Palladino are sometimes impressive, and those of full-form materialisation observed by Sir William Crookes and already mentioned (p. 57) are still more so. Professor Richet also had fair results with a non-professional medium, Marthe Beraud, at Algiers,[2] and Baron von Schrenck-Notzing has had similar experiences with the same medium.[3] But the matter is not yet settled. The phenomena seem probably genuine sometimes, but the usual conditions are not good and, moreover, they lend themselves to conscious or subconscious deception. For the present volume, therefore, what has already been said in Chapter V must suffice.

A curious and rare form of physical mediumship is that known as the "direct voice." Mrs. Wriedt of Detroit seems to be the only powerful living medium in this

[1] "The Reality of Psychic Phenomena," and Sir William Barrett's "On the Threshold of the Unseen," p. 48.

[2] "De Quelques Phénomènes dits de Matérialisation," in "Annales des Sciences Psychiques," 1905, pp. 649 and following.

[3] "Materialisationsphänomene" (Ernst Reinhardt, Munich, 1914) and "Der Kampf um die Materialisationsphänomene." *See* also "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxvii., pp. 333 and following.

department. In her presence voices, purporting to be those of the sitters' deceased relatives, are heard, even in a good light. A friend of mine once held a long conversation with his deceased wife, in his own drawing-room, while Mrs. Wriedt was having afternoon tea at the other end of the room, thirty feet away; and the voice—magnified by a trumpet held to my friend's ear—was continuous and distinct when Mrs. Wriedt was unmistakably eating and drinking. Admiral Usborne Moore describes many evidential incidents of Mrs. Wriedt's mediumship.[1] The Mr. William Jeffrey of his book is my friend just alluded to.

Most direct-voice sittings, however, are held in darkness, and the conditions are then unsatisfactory. It may be true that darkness is necessary for some psychical phenomena, as it is for photography; but there is every reason to believe that in genuine cases the phenomena can be obtained in at least a fair light, sufficient for the watching of the medium. In complete darkness there can be nothing evidential in the mere fact of voices or of movement of objects; there must be evidential matter said, going beyond the medium's knowledge. And this is better obtained in other ways, e.g., through a clairvoyant or trance-speaker, when full light for note-taking is allowed. Dark sittings are for the most part to be deprecated as encouraging fraud and perhaps abnormal and pathological states of mind, and as yielding little or no satisfactory evidence.

Something must be said here about "spirit-photography," though the subject is exceptionally difficult. The literature of this phase of spiritualism is almost useless, owing to looseness of observation and description; e.g., Miss Georgiana Houghton's "Chronicles of the Photo-

[1] "The Voices" (London: Watts and Co.).

graphs of Spiritual Beings" (London : E. W. Allen, 1882) gives many reproductions of Hudson's photographs, but not enough critical detail. It is alleged that in the presence of certain people a photographic plate exposed in the ordinary way generally shows an "extra" with the sitter. This extra is usually a face or head only, draped in muslin-like stuff, and sometimes recognised as a deceased relative but more often not. The trouble is, of course, that it is easy enough to "fake" such photographs; but inasmuch as the spirit-photographer allows and indeed requests the sitter to take his own plates, put them in the slide, and develop them after exposure, it is difficult to see how the thing can be done fraudulently. Moreover, in some cases known to the present writer, the sitter has used his own camera as well as his own plates, also having a Kodak expert present. The sitter is an exceedingly clever amateur conjurer and a business man in a large way—not the sort of man to be easily deceived—and he had the medium in his (the sitter's) own house. Yet the results were successful. At present there seems to be only one "spirit-photographer" in England, and it is much to be desired that an investigation should be carried out in such a way as to establish the genuineness of the phenomena if they are genuine. There is nothing *a priori* impossible about them, for if there is something "there" that reflects invisible but actinic rays while transparent to ordinary light rays, it would be photographable.

CHAPTER IX

CONFIRMATORY PHENOMENA IN INDIA

As already said, these curious phenomena are widely distributed, both in space and time, and the close agreement in character which we find in the phenomena of widely separated countries is a fact which is to be noted as an indication that the happenings are not likely to be due to trickery. Forms of mere conjuring might, surely, be expected to have national characteristics and to differ as languages do; whereas we find that accounts of what we call sittings, though describing events in the presence of an Indian fakir who knows no English and has never heard of Western spiritualism, are almost exact duplicates of—say—a report of one of Dr. Crawford's sittings with his Belfast circle. And the claim is the same. The operators are said to be the Pitris—the spirits of departed human beings. It may be worth while to illustrate this correspondence in some detail.

In a bulky volume,[1] M. Louis Jacolliot, Chief Judge of the Chandenagur Tribunal, describes phenomena witnessed by himself, under good test conditions. He affirms his own complete impartiality as to explanations, though also admitting the tendency—inevitable in an educated Westerner—to seek naturalistic causes; certainly it cannot be said that he was prejudiced in favour of belief. But,

[1] "Le Spiritisme dans le monde: l'initiation et les sciences occultes dans l'Inde et chez tous les peuples d'antiquité," Paris, 1875. English translation, "Occult Science in India" (London: Rider).

whatever the causes, the things seemed to happen; and though some of them might be attributable to hypnotic hallucination, this is hardly possible with all of them. Moreover, no one can reasonably doubt the objectivity of, e.g., supernormal raps, for Dr. Crawford has recorded them on a gramophone. Gramophone discs or cylinders are not, so far as we are aware, capable of being hypnotised or hallucinated.

The fakir in question, Covindasamy by name, came from the south of Hindustan, and M. Jacolliot made friends with him at Benares, mainly by virtue of being able to speak his language (Tamil). In consequence of this he was able to have daily sittings for some weeks.

On the first occasion Covindasamy sat on the ground, in bright sunshine, extending his hands towards an immense bronze vase full of water. (All the sittings were held in the palace or grounds of the prince who was entertaining M. Jacolliot.) "Within five minutes the vase commenced to rock to and fro upon its base, and approach the fakir gently and with regular motion. As the distance diminished, metallic sounds escaped from it, as if some one had struck it with a steel rod. At certain times the blows were so numerous and quick that they produced a sound similar to that made by a hailstorm upon a metal roof."[1]

[1] *Cf.* Sir William Crookes in "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism," pp. 3-4: "That certain physical phenomena, such as the movement of material substances, and the production of sounds resembling electric discharges, occur under circumstances in which they cannot be explained by any physical law at present known, is a fact of which I am as certain as I am of the most elementary fact in chemistry." Also what has just been said about Dr. Maxwell's investigations, on pp. 104-5 of the present volume. Also the experiments, noted carefully on the spot and with no professional medium present, of Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, described in "Miracles and Modern Spiritualism," p. 133. (1896 ed., Redway. First ed., 1874.)

M. Jacolliot asked if he might give directions, and the vase advanced, receded, or stood still, as he requested. Similarly, at request, the raps became slow and regular like the ticking of a clock, or rapid and continuous like the roll of a drum, or one every ten seconds—which M. Jacolliot timed,—or beating time to the tunes of a musical-box. During all this time the fakir had neither changed his position nor made any movement. Then, rising, he rested the tips of his fingers for a while on the edge of the vase, which eventually lifted itself into the air three times to a height of seven or eight inches. M. Jacolliot states that the vase, even when empty, could hardly be moved by two men. He took copious notes while the phenomena were proceeding, and had each of them repeated in a different manner, his requests always being complied with at once.

On another occasion Covindasamy was levitated two feet from the ground, with his legs crossed under him, Brahmin-fashion, and he remained thus for twenty minutes. There was contact with the earth, for he rested his right hand on a cane of M. Jacolliot's; but this could not possibly have been supporting his whole weight, nor could he have maintained equilibrium if it had. Before departing, he said he would ask M. Jacolliot's friends to manifest themselves to him at midnight in his bedroom. M. Jacolliot took elaborate precautions against fraud—searching rooms, sending servants out, etc.—but at midnight he heard a number of raps which he could not explain.[1]

At another sitting, Covindasamy exactly paralleled an experiment with Dr. Crawford's Belfast medium, when Sir William Barrett tried in vain to lift a normally quite

[1] "Occult Science in India," pp. 238-9. *Cf.* p. 103 *ante;* raps heard after Eusapia's departure from the S.P.R. investigators' rooms.

light table.[1] M. Jacolliot had seen something of this sort done before, and, taking a small teak-wood stand, which he could lift with a finger and thumb, he asked the fakir if he could fix it so that it could not be moved. Covindasamy placed both hands on it, and remained motionless for a quarter of an hour, then saying: "The spirits have come and nobody can remove the table without their permission," M. Jacolliot seized it and lifted, or tried to, but it would not budge. A piece broke off, so he took hold of the legs, which were united by a cross-brace, and tugged again, but without success. He then asked Covindasamy to go to the other end of the terrace, about seven yards away, and in a few minutes the table was lifted. "The Pitris have departed," said the Hindu, "because their means of terrestrial communication was broken. Listen! they are coming back again." And a shower of raps was heard on a copper platter over which Covindasamy had put his hands.

Another interesting experiment exactly paralleled those which Sir William Crookes carried out with an accordion and D. D. Home. M. Jacolliot hung a harmoniflute to an iron bar on the terrace by a cord round the wooden square forming a portion of the bellows, and asked the Hindu if he could make it play without touching it. Covindasamy at once took the cord between the thumb and forefinger of each hand and stood motionless. The bellows soon began to be contracted and inflated, and notes came; finally the instrument played a tune, the Hindu remaining perfectly still and M. Jacolliot kneeling down and watching the keys moving up and down in accordance with the requirements of the melody, though untouched by visible

[1] Barrett: "On the Threshold of the Unseen," p. 48.

fingers. All this time the Hindu never touched the instrument.

Another time he took a handful of feathers out of a vase, threw them into the air above his head, making passes underneath them as they fell, whereupon they ascended spirally and stuck against the roof-carpet. On his departure they fell, and M. Jacolliot left them on the floor for some time to assure himself that the thing was not hallucinatory.

But the last two sittings were perhaps the most extraordinary, as indeed was promised, for the Hindu had said he would ask all the Pitris who assisted him to come and do all they could. Among other things a penholder rose up on its point and wrote in some sand—another parallel to a half-successful experiment of Sir William Crookes's with Home, described at page 93 of "Researches"—and it not only answered M. Jacolliot's mental questions, but also gave correctly the first word of the fifth line of the twenty-first page—as asked for—of a closed book.[1] Covindasamy had his hands extended horizontally, and did not touch the penholder with any part of his body while it was writing. It was broad daylight at the time, about ten o'clock in the morning.

The last sitting was at night, but the lamp gave sufficient light for small print to be read in any part of the room. Covindasamy discarded even the loin-cloth which usually was his only garment, sat down on the floor and began incantations. (Perhaps these serve to render the mind passive and conditions good, like the singing at some spiritualistic sittings.) Presently a phosphorescent cloud formed in the middle of the room. Hands, at first vaporous and then more material, showed themselves, some

[1] Stainton Moses' guides gave him similar tests.

luminous and transparent, some opaque and casting a shadow. Sixteen of these were counted, moving about rapidly. One of them came and pressed M. Jacolliot's hand, feeling small, supple, and life-like; the hand of a young woman. "The spirit is present, though one of its hands is alone visible," said Covindasamy. "You can speak to it, if you wish." M. Jacolliot asked for a souvenir; the hand faded out of his grasp, flew to a bouquet, plucked a rosebud, threw it at his feet, and vanished.[1]

Other hands appeared, tracing letters in the air in luminous characters, which vanished when the last letter was written. One of the messages, written in Sanskrit, was: "You will attain happiness when you lay aside this perishable body." Finally, there was a full-form materialisation of an old Brahmin priest, whose hands M. Jacolliot took, finding them warm and lifelike, and whom he asked: "Are you really a former inhabitant of the earth?" Immediately the word "*Am*" flashed out in fiery letters on the Brahmin's breast. He then "faded away before my eyes."

The sitting had lasted several hours. Covindasamy was covered with perspiration and much exhausted.

On another occasion, at Pondicherry, with a different fakir, M. Jacolliot had evidence of the agency of one of his own departed friends. Leaves with holes in the middle were impaled on perpendicular sticks supported in pots of earth, and after some waiting and an invocation a cool breeze was felt; then the leaves began to ascend and descend on the sticks. By calling out the alphabet, and the

[1] *Cf.* Crookes: "*In the light* I have seen a luminous cloud hover over a heliotrope on a side table, break a sprig off, and carry the sprig to a lady; and on some occasions I have seen a similar luminous cloud visibly condense to the form of a hand and carry small objects about." —"Researches," p. 91.

leaves moving at the right letter, a message was spelt out:

"*Alban Brunier, died at Bourg-en-Cresse* (*Ain*), *January 3rd,* 1856." All this was correct. M. Jacolliot carried out many tests, e.g., passing and repassing in the space between the fakir and the pots of earth, but there was no interruption in the movement of the leaves. No normal means of doing the trick were discoverable. The fakir said, as they all say, that spirits or ancestral shades were the agents. M. Jacolliot, who knew little of Spiritualism, was incredulous but baffled, and he leaves it at that.

The Brahmanic scheme is somewhat like that of Andrew Jackson Davis. God is the whole, the soul is an atom which undergoes progressive transformation on its purificatory way back to the eternal source. And, as we have seen, on the phenomenal side also it seems certain that the things known as spiritualistic in the West are identical or closely parallel with those said to occur in India among people who know nothing of history over here.

CHAPTER X

GHOSTS

For the last century or two it has been fashionable to laugh at "ghost stories"; but it is now becoming clear—as indeed might have been surmised in the case of so persistent a belief—that "ghosts" are facts in Nature, though very unusual facts, like globular lightning, and not yet fully understood. By "ghost" we mean, for the moment, the perception of a deceased human being who is not "there" in any known physical way. In order to avoid the romantic and frivolous associations of the popular term, the S.P.R. calls such percepts "hallucinations," a hallucination being, in Gurney's phrase, "a percept which lacks, but which can only by distinct reflection be recognised as lacking, the objective basis which it suggests." This covers experiences of other senses as well as that of sight, and indeed there is plenty of evidence for ghosts of sounds, touches (as in the haunting of John Wesley's parental home (pp. 94-5), and even smells, when nothing is seen. But the majority of such occurrences seem to be of visual type; namely, ghosts in the ordinary sense.

Soon after the founding of the S.P.R. that body made a determined attempt to reach some really scientific conclusion on this matter by a laborious collection of data. A committee was appointed, consisting of Professor and Mrs. Sidgwick, Mr. F. W. H. Myers, Mr. Frank Podmore, and Miss Alice Johnson (secretary to the Society), with

Dr. A. T. Myers's help on the medical question as to the influence of ill-health in causing hallucinations. An army of 410 collectors gratuitously assisted the committee, and in the three years from April, 1889, to May, 1892, 17,000 answers were received from people to whom the carefully prepared *questionnaire* had been sent. The collating of this huge mass of testimony was naturally a great task, and many interesting features of it cannot even be glanced at here. Readers are referred to the masterly digest and summing up in the "Proceedings" of the S.P.R., vol. x.; or, for similar matter, to "Phantasms of the Living," which has been reissued in abridged form.[1] Suffice it to say that the committee expressed its considered opinion that "between deaths and apparitions of the dying person a connection exists which is not due to chance alone. This we hold as a proved fact. The discussion of its full implications cannot be estimated in this paper; nor, perhaps, exhausted in this age."[2]

One case may be quoted as illustration. Mr. S. Walker-Anderson, living in Australia, woke up between 9 and 12 o'clock on the night of November 17th, 1890, and saw the figure of his aunt P——— standing "near the foot of the bed at one side, dressed in an ordinary black dress such as he had seen her in many times. She looked older and stouter than when he last saw her three years before. She seemed to speak, i.e., he saw the lips move, though he heard no sound, and he seemed to catch that she meant 'good-bye.' Then the figure gradually vanished."[3] The

[1] Edited by Mrs. Sidgwick. (Kegan Paul.) The compilers, determined to err on the side of caution, assumed that even when the apparition followed the death, it might be due to an impulse sent out before; hence the title.

[2] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. x., p. 394.

[3] *Ibid.*, vol. x., pp. 211-12-13

appearance was quite solid and lifelike, and lasted about twenty seconds. Mr. Walker-Anderson told his wife in the morning, and made a note: "I believe Aunt P——— died on the 17th." He had no reason to expect it, for, though she had not been very well, there was no thought of serious illness. It turned out, however, that she had died, in England, two or three hours before the time of the apparition. Mrs. Walker-Anderson confirmed her husband's narrative. Professor Sidgwick interviewed both, and the S.P.R. verified the date of Mrs. P——'s death. Similar cases, in one of which the percipient saw his mother, have been reported by the present writer.[1] These things, like other psychic phenomena, occur in all places and periods. Ben Jonson, staying in the country with Sir Robert Cotton, had a vision of his eldest son "with a bloody cross on his forehead." It turned out that the boy had died of the plague, in London.

The supposition of the real agency of the dead, in some at least of these cases, is supported by the fact that apparitions of living people have been produced experimentally. Mr. S. H. Beard, for instance, caused his phantasm to be seen by two young ladies living three miles away. Expectation does not account for it, for he says: "I had not mentioned in any way my intention of trying this experiment, for the simple reason that it was only on retiring to rest upon this Sunday night that I made up my mind to do so. The time at which I determined I would be there was one o'clock in the morning. . . . On the following Thursday I went to see the ladies in question, and in the course of conversation (without any allusion to the subject on my part) the elder one told me that on the previous Sunday night she had been much terrified by perceiving

[1] "Man is a Spirit," pp. 133-5, etc.

me standing by her bedside, and that she screamed when the apparition advanced towards her, and awoke her little sister, who saw me also."[1] The time was about one o'clock in the morning, and the percipients were quite sure that they were wide awake. Mr. Beard says: "Besides exercising my power of volition very strongly, I put forth an effort which I cannot find words to describe. I was conscious of a mysterious influence of some sort permeating in my body, and had a distinct impression that I was exercising some force with which I had been hitherto unacquainted, but which I can now at certain times set in motion at will."[2] The full account is given by Mr. Myers, with the firsthand narratives of the two percipients. In his pages the agent appears as "S. H. B.," but Mr. Beard kindly allows me to give his name. He also confirms the accuracy of the account. If, then, an apparition in a case like this is demonstrably due to the agency of the human being who is perceived, it is reasonable to suppose that apparitions of the dead may be caused by the person appearing, in the same way. It cannot be proved, because the deceased person is not here to be questioned; but it is reasonable, particularly in view of the fact that survival is indicated by a mass of quite other evidence.

One objection may be urged, that an apparition occurring soon after a death may be the result of a thought sent out before death, which, however, did not reach the percipient at once; or, if it did, did not immediately rise to the surface of his consciousness. This is known as the theory of deferred or latent telepathy, and is a legitimate guess; but it becomes difficult to accept it in cases of apparitions of long-dead people. In these latter cases, however, the death is usually known to the percipient, and may, there-

[1] Myers, "Human Personality," vol. i., p. 293. [2] *Loc. cit.*

fore, be a subjective hallucination. But this, again, is negatived when the spirit gives information which was not known to the percipient, as has happened in a few cases. The whole subject is a difficult one, requiring much further study and accumulation of data; but the evidence is certainly tending towards a face-value interpretation of many of these happenings.

The ghost proper, however, is perhaps a ghost attached to a definite place rather than appearing at the time of death; and here, again, there is good evidence. Whatever be the exact explanation, the fact of the existence of houses which are, in the popular term, haunted is not doubted by experienced investigators. Several accounts of this kind of thing are on record, notably the case of "Capt. Morton's," where an apparition was seen by seven reliable persons, who made first-hand statements of their experiences. Mr. Myers visited the house and saw at least four of the witnesses. The case is too long to describe here, but it seems conclusive for the occurrence of something supernormal, if human testimony is to be believed.[1]

Admittedly it does not seem probable that in these cases the ghost is "all there." Mr. Beard did not know how his phantasm had behaved, nor, indeed, whether it had appeared at all, until he heard the percipients' account. Similarly, a dead person may not know when *his* phantom has appeared. Indeed, he may not consciously will it to appear. Myers has suggested that sometimes these experiences may be the *dreams* of the dead, which, from some cause unknown to us, occasionally become percept-

[1] "Human Personality," vol. ii., pp. 389-96, and "Proceedings," viii., pp. 311-32. In my "Man is a Spirit" a case is quoted in which the apparition was seen by seven individuals, at different times.

ible; or they may not be even dreams. Ovid, no doubt reproducing a belief of his own or some rather earlier time, describes the *umbra* as flitting round the tomb, though the spirit is really elsewhere. Lytton, in his story "The Haunters and the Haunted," develops this theory that apparitions are not necessarily spirits or souls, but are the *eidola* of the dead.[1] Similarly with the *ka* of the Egyptians.[2] And the Theosophists have their doctrine of astral shells. On the whole, however, it would seem that there is some connection, varying in degree in different cases. The apparition is not the whole self of the person; but it is really representative of him, and would not be there if he himself were not in existence somewhere. It is an echo, or a reflection, or a reverberation, or a shadow (as in Plato's cave-analogy), or a small outlying creek of his personality. All metaphors no doubt fail; but we must visualise these happenings in some such way for the present, as a temporary way of assimilating them to normal experience.

The phenomena just referred to are spontaneous, in the sense that they occur unexpectedly and unsought, perhaps partly in consequence of an effort of will from the other side and partly in consequence of some exceptionally receptive state in the percipient; e.g., the mental quiescence and absence of sense-stimulation of a person just awaking from ordinary sleep. But some can achieve such a receptive state, in greater or less degree, at will. By becoming passive and not attending to physical sights and sounds, they become perceptive of another order of existence, and see into the spiritual world. We call these people

[1] *Cf.* "Iliad," xxiii., 72; Æschylus, "Prom.," 568.

[2] Renouf's "Lectures on the Origin and Growth of Religion as illustrated by the Religion of Ancient Egypt" (Hibbert Lectures), pp. 148 and following.

"normal clairvoyants," because they are clairvoyant without surrendering their normal consciouness and going into trance. Probably normal clairvoyants who give sittings to all comers are apt to let their own imagination work when the true gleams do not come, and this may occur involuntarily and without conscious fraud. It seems probable that many semi-mediums cannot distinguish between the product of their own subliminal imagination and true perception of other-side realities.

One medium known to me, however, is endowed with the power of distinguishing, and consequently will not sit for all comers. He will give an occasional sitting to friends, on the understanding that he promises nothing, that he will describe what he sees, but will sit silent or talk of other things if he sees nothing. A long series of sittings under these conditions has convinced me that he has genuine power, in gleams and not entirely at command, of seeing into the other world; further, that the perception is a sort of double-factored affair, dependent on the will and act of some spirit as well as on the perception of the medium. And it often happens that the spirits who are seen are the near relatives or dear friends of some person—quite unknown to the medium—who is dying. They have come to meet their friend, and, being in our regions, are perceptible either by their mere presence there or—as is evident in some cases—by a definite effort on their part. The following may serve as illustrative of this kind of evidence:

At a sitting on July 21st, 1914, the medium (Mr. Wilkinson) said that an old gentleman named Leather was present; had been a very gentlemanly and rather retiring man. Mr. Wilkinson hesitated to say the name, for he had never heard of it as such before; it meant to him

only the material of which boots, etc., are made. But it was quite correct, and other identity-evidence was obtained. I had known Mr. Leather very well; but I gave the medium no information except that I recognised the person. On November 18th, 1914, Mr. Wilkinson wrote to me from Bournemouth, asking whether I had known some old gentleman named Parrbury, probably Robert; a man who had retained his faculties almost to the last, and who appeared to be keenly interested in me. Apparently Wilkinson did not see anything, but got these impressions. At first I could make no sense of them; but I soon found that Robert Parberry (which latter Wilkinson had taken for a surname, also spelling it wrongly, apparently from the sound heard clairaudiently) were Mr. Leather's first two names. Next time I saw Mr. Wilkinson he told me that the "Robert Parrbury" he had mentioned was waiting about for an old friend to pass over; that was why he was in these regions. The fact was that Mr. Leather's closest friend—an intimate of fifty years' standing—was dying; he departed on November 29th, 1914; and I am sure he would be very glad to be met by his old chum. At a later sitting the two came together; but I have heard nothing of them since, and no doubt they are going on ahead now. The medium had never heard of either of the two men; they lived in another town, and had for a long time lived retired lives, being well over eighty at death. Both knew me well.[1]

On another occasion, February 17th, 1916, our late minister turned up at a sitting, and it was indicated that he had come to meet some old woman, over eighty, who had been failing gradually. As a matter of fact, his widow had died two days before, some distance away,

1 "Psychical Investigations," p. 15, etc.

and the funeral was fixed for the day after the sitting. Apparently she had not yet got quite away, and was probably in the post-mortem sleep or rest which seems to occur before the spirit turns to its new course; and her husband, whom I had known well, and who had died in 1900, was looking after her and waiting about until she was ready to go on with him.[1] This fact of dying people being met is further borne out by their own experiences, for they frequently see the forms of their welcoming friends. I have given several firsthand cases which have been sent to me, in my other volume just alluded to. As death approaches, the veil grows thin and rends, the dying person's spiritual sight is opened, and he sees what our clogged senses cannot see.[2]

Ghosts, then—representations of the bodily form of a deceased person, usually looking natural and lifelike—are seen (1) occasionally and anywhere by ordinary people, when some relative or friend dies; (2) locally, by ordinary people, at places which have a special interest for some departed person; (3) almost anywhere and at almost any time, though not *entirely* at will, by specially endowed people whom we call normal clairvoyants. And the fact

[1] "Psychical Investigations," p. 29. If it is urged that these incidents may have been due to a reading of my mind, I reply that in many cases *unknown* spirits have been named and described—people I had never heard of—and they turned out to have been friends of the spirit who was said to have brought them. Apparently my friends on the other side, realising my desire for evidence which shall exclude mind-reading hypotheses, have successfully planned such evidence.

[2] Sometimes a clairvoyant person present will see the same thing, thus negativing the subjective-hallucination theory. Several cases of the kind are described in a little book called "The Ministry of Angels," by A Hospital Nurse (London: G. Bell and Sons, Limited, 1918), whose testimony confirms this idea that dying people are met by welcoming friends. The nurse is clairvoyant, and described spirits who were unknown to her but who were recognised as relatives or friends of the departing one, who also saw them.

that living people can sometimes project their visible phantasm is an indication that phantasms of the dead may be similarly willed by the dead person who appears. But in all such cases the phantasm represents only a part of the consciousness which has produced it.

As to the "materiality" of these forms, it probably differs in different cases. Sometimes the perception may be non-physical, between discarnate and incarnate spirit; in other cases there may be something external though not sufficiently near the state of ordinary matter to be perceptible to those without exceptional sensitivity (as there are high-pitched sounds which few can hear), and in others the form may be objective and material enough to be seen by anyone. We know very little yet about this part of the subject, and can only theorise tentatively; but analogies support some such idea of gradation.

CHAPTER XI

ON EVIDENCE, PROOF AND BELIEF

It seems, then, to be admitted by most investigators that the main spiritualistic claim of human survival and possible communication is true. Opinions differ about this or that incident and its interpretation, but most of the S.P.R. investigators believe that communication is a fact; not a common fact, a much rarer one than many think, but still a fact. Mrs. Sidgwick, probably the most cautious among the S.P.R. workers, states emphatically her complete conviction that *some* supernormal explanation of Mrs. Piper's phenomena is required, and that evidence from other quarters has recently been obtained, "tending, in my opinion, decidedly to support the hypothesis of communication from the dead."[1] And, later: "I must admit that the general effect of the evidence on my own mind is that there is co-operation with us by friends and former fellow-workers no longer in the body" (page 256). And the Right Hon. Gerald W. Balfour similarly says: "The scripts which we owe to the group of automatists, of whom Mrs. Verrall, Miss Verrall, and Mrs. Willett are the chief, go back for many years now, and require to be considered together and as a whole. A long and laborious study of them carried on from this point of view has brought me slowly but surely to a conviction that there is

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxviii., pp. 6, 7.

much in them that cannot be satisfactorily explained except upon the spiritistic hypothesis."[1]

It may therefore be asked—and many of us have been asked rather impatiently—"What, then, is the difference between a spiritualist and a psychical researcher who believes in survival and communication?" And admittedly the two classes do shade into each other. But also they shade away from each other, and we may indicate a sort of average specific difference.

The difference is fundamentally a difference of temper or attitude, leading, of course, to different belief on points of detail. The spiritualist, once convinced, tends to accept things afterwards very much at their face value. All trance controls, for example, seem to be accepted as spirits; no attempt, or no determined attempt, is made to test them. And the same with normal clairvoyance. A medium will say: "I see Mrs. Smith [a friend who died some time ago, and who was known to the speaker] standing by you," and it is accepted by the spiritualist that Mrs. Smith is there. Similarly with planchette-writing and the like.

The psychical researcher is of a more inquiring turn of mind. Like Iago (I admit that the comparison is odious), he is nothing if not critical. He wants proof that Mrs. Smith is there. He may have the fullest confidence in the seer's genuineness, but the mere fact of the vision is not enough. It may be only a hallucination, a sort of externalised dream. Some evidence of identity is required; some message from Mrs. Smith which is somehow characteristic of her, and which cannot reasonably be supposed to emanate from the mind, conscious or subconscious, of the seer, or indeed of others.

One of the principal difficulties in the way of admitting

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxvii, p. 236.

an element of supernormality—whether telepathy, clairvoyance, or communication from the dead—is the unknown reach of subliminal memory. It is certain that in some of us, and probably in all, there is a mental region of which we are not conscious. To take an ordinary illustration: most of us have had the experience of forgetting a name, yet being able to say: "I should know it if I heard it," which seems to indicate that something in us knows it all along. In a recent experience of my own, I had forgotten and was trying to remember the name of a certain hotel at Blackpool. The name had entirely escaped me. After vain efforts to recall it, I remembered—although I still failed to capture the name—that there was another hotel of the same name in London, *and I knew which it was,* i.e., I could visualise its exterior. Then, running over the names of London's best known hotels, I remembered that this was the Metropole, which was the word required. Apparently some part of my mind knew what I was wanting, and, being unable to send the information up to my conscious levels by ordinary means, resorted to a roundabout way, successfully.

Going a step farther, to things forgotten over a long period, the famous case occurs to one, of the servant girl who in delirium spoke Hebrew and Greek, which she was not supposed to know, but which (so it was said) she had picked up by hearing her old master, a scholar, reading or declaiming his favourite authors aloud. This story, however, though often quoted, is very insufficiently evidenced. Its source is Coleridge's "Biographia Literaria," I. 117, and he says, "It occurred in a Roman Catholic town in Germany a year or two before my arrival in Göttingen." But it does not appear that Coleridge met either the girl or anyone who had investigated the case; his story seems

to have been based on gossip. No names are given, either of the girl, the investigators, the scholar, or even the town. The story may be true, but obviously the evidence for it is practically *nil*.

There are, however, a few fairly well-evidenced cases of the kind on record, one of them in the *Lancet* of June 14th, 1902. Dr. Henry Freeborn there describes the illness of an elderly lady who, in delirium, spoke Hindustani. The fact was that she had been born in India and had spoken Hindustani only up to the age of four; after that, not at all. Consequently, long before the time of her illness, when she was seventy years old, she had forgotten all except a very few words of the language. Yet in the delirium she spoke it fluently, and quoted poetry of the kind repeated to children by Indian ayahs.[1]

Moreover, there is evidence from hypnotic experimentation and from the curious phenomena of multiple personality, to show that subliminal memory is wider than the memory of the normal consciousness. Consequently, in all psychical phenomena such as automatic writing, trance speech, and the like, we must be reasonably sure that the information given by or through the automatist has never been in his mind at all. I was surprised recently, when looking through some reviews of ten years ago, to find how completely I had forgotten many books which I had reviewed; forgotten both the books and everything I had written about them. In a few cases the review had a certain dim familiarity about it, but in most cases it was entirely strange, and my name at the foot came as a shock. Yet on the basis of some hypnotic experimentation it seems not unreasonable to believe that somewhere in my subliminal I retain knowledge of those reviews

[1] "Journal," S.P.R., vol. x., pp. 279-83.

and of many other things completely forgotten; and if such things appeared in my automatic writing—if I were an automatist, which I am not—I might honestly but erroneously say that I had never known them. There is a case on record in which an ostensible spirit named "Blanche Poynings" communicated through the automatic script of a non-professional automatist, and a great deal of the historical matter given was new to the normal consciousness of the automatist, also going beyond the knowledge of the investigators, yet turning out true. This seemed seriously evidential of the agency of some external mind, but it was eventually found that "Blanche Poynings" was a character in a historical novel which had been read aloud to the automatist many years before. She had quite forgotten it, but evidently her subliminal had retained the details very completely. Practically all the historical facts given in the script were contained in the book, and there seems no reason to doubt that the book was the source of the messages. Subliminals seem to personate automatically; to think themselves external spirits. In a way, this is not surprising, for they are—so to speak—halfway houses or connecting links with the spiritual world. They adjoin our consciousnesses on this side and the spiritual world on the other.

Great care, therefore, is necessary as to what we say to sensitives who are helping us in experimentation; also close knowledge of their lives, their reading, their associations, in order to estimate the probability or improbability of this or that piece of knowledge ever having reached them through normal channels. Most investigators who have the opportunity of working with a good sensitive are ultimately convinced that subliminal memory is not sufficient to explain all the matter given, and that some

supernormal agency must be invoked. My own investigations leave me clear on this point. And if supernormal agency must be invoked, it is possible that some of the doubtful things may rightly be attributed thereto, though we exclude them as non-evidential because of the possibility of the medium's having at some time or other known them. I think this is so. But it is well to err on the safe side, and to allow liberal scope to subliminal memory, setting aside as non-evidential anything that the sensitive may reasonably be supposed to have ever known; though I must affirm that in my friend Wilkinson's case I have never found any reason to believe that the phenomena were due either to his subliminal knowledge or, indeed, to any mind-reading. He has an exceptional power of keeping the channels clear and eliminating this-side influences. And we may point out that mind-reading has never been proved; it is quite different from telepathic experiments in which the thought-transmission is *willed* by the sender.

As to trance-controls, some of them do give real evidence, either on their own account, as with G. P., or on behalf of others whom they ostensibly hunt up on the other side, as with Dr. Phinuit. But many others, of the second-rate medium type, never produce any evidence at all, even of subliminal and wider memory. They talk religious or other platitudes, and are uninteresting to the psychical researcher. The spiritualist tends to accept the difference of personality—the obvious change from the medium's normal self—as sufficient basis for belief that the agency really is another mind. But in face of what we know of multiple personality, it is rash to accept face-value interpretations. The researcher suspends judgment, unless knowledge is shown which goes beyond what can reasonably be attributed to the medium.

As to the nature of controls in general, psychical researchers themselves are divided. Some of the more spiritualistic no doubt accept any control as a real spirit if it can produce evidence of its identity, as in the case of G. P.; or even if, though unable to do this, it is vouched for by other spirits who do so establish their identity, as with Phinuit, who was vouched for by G. P. Other researchers, more cautious, accept G. P. because of his first-hand evidence, but suspend judgment as to Phinuit; though this results in a rather difficult position, in view of G. P.'s certificate that Phinuit is as real a spirit as himself. Finally, the extremely cautious wing of the S.P.R.—represented by Mrs. Sidgwick—regards all controls as secondary personalities of the medium, though real spirits are there in the background, telephoning through the secondary personality, which provides an instrument or channel. Which is right it is for psychological analysis to settle, such as Mrs. Sidgwick has done in the case of Mrs. Piper.[1] The question is not important from the spiritualistic point of view, if the main contention of survival and communication is admitted.

The question of what constitutes sufficient proof—a question which has to be decided by each person—brings up that of the nature of proof in general, with regard to these phenomena. We are sometimes requested to produce "crucial cases." This is impossible. It is even more impossible than some of our critics think. They sometimes say they would accept as proof something which we, as a matter of fact, would not. It is curious to find

[1] "Proceedings," S.P.R., vol. xxviii. There may indeed be truth in both views. Some controls may be secondary aspects of the medium's mind, others may be external minds; and one may merge into the other, a spirit advancing from distant telepathy to full possession of the medium.

that the sceptics' standard of evidence is lower than ours, but so it is. A certain Canon, lecturing at Sheffield University, is reported to have said: "If a medium could reveal a message written by a person before death and placed in a sealed envelope in a safe, then the proof would be absolute."[1] But it would not. The Canon's standard of evidence is much too low. We could never be sure that the person in question had not mentioned to someone else what he had written, and, if he had, telepathy from this someone would account for the message. Even if we did believe that the dead person had not mentioned it, there is still the possibility that he might have unconsciously "telepathed" it to someone before his death, this latter person then telepathing it to the medium. True, these suppositions are rather far-fetched, and in cases where knowledge is revealed which, so far as we know, was not possessed by any living mind, it is admissible to say that the evidence is strong. The Benja case in "Human Personality" (vol. ii., page 182) is a case in point, the message revealing the contents of a sealed letter and the whereabouts of a half-brick which Benja had hidden before his death, for the express purpose of a test. The evidence is strong; but it is not absolute proof, for there is still true clairvoyance of living people to be reckoned with, i.e., power to discover hidden objects by unknown perception-methods. Our critics, while believing us too credulous, are really much more credulous than we are! They would believe, or at least this Canon apparently would believe, on evidence which would not convince us.

The "proof" of survival must always be cumulative. It cannot be of the knock-down kind, for it is never possible to exclude all other hypotheses. The survival hypo-

[1] *Sheffield Daily Telegraph*, October 24, 1917.

thesis may seem the most reasonable, but no psychical researcher will say it is the only possible one. It is a question of heaping up data until the tendency of the whole is seen, as in all other inductive sciences. It cannot be proved by a crucial test that the earth is spheroid or that it goes round the sun; indeed there are flat-earth and fixed-earth cranks still in existence, who cannot be called insane. Our beliefs in these matters—where they are not the result of mere acceptance of authority, as they really are in most cases—are based not on a crucial test, but on a large mass of accumulated observations. So with psychical science. To say that absolute proof can be supplied by one incident is to show complete failure to understand not only the canons of evidence in psychical research, but the canons of evidence in inductive science generally.

This, however, need not dismay us. Science goes slowly and tentatively, but it has achieved great results in the investigation of the material world, and we may legitimately hope that the same methods may yield great results in the investigation of the spiritual world. Moreover, on this question of proof and evidence it is encouraging to note the attitude of the law, which deals specially with these things. The lawyers tell us that a mass of testimony from a number of different people, even though no two accounts are exactly alike, may be better evidence than the narrative of an actual eye-witness.

"For instance: the question for a jury to determine is the identity of A, who is alleged to have shot B. A witness, C, may come forward and swear that in broad daylight he saw A fire the fatal shot. In a sense this seems the most cogent proof possible; but in fact it is not so. C may have an interest in getting rid of A, and may be willing to perjure himself to accomplish his object. This,

of course, is analogous to the hypothesis of deliberate fraud as applied to our experiments. Again: C may have very defective vision and may be only mistaken in swearing to the identification. This would correspond to mal-observation in our experiments. But if, on the other hand, it is by independent witnesses proved that shortly before the murder A purchased a revolver, that the bullet found in the body exactly resembled others found in A's possession, that footprints of a peculiar character were discovered leading to and from the spot where the shot was fired and were found to correspond to the marks made by boots known to have been worn by A at the time, and so on; though not one of these facts taken alone would be quite convincing, their cumulative force might well be overwhelming and might justify a much more confident verdict of 'guilty' than the mere unsupported testimony of C, however clear."[1]

Coercive proof, then—proof that cannot be resisted—is impossible; even in mathematics it is the same, for you cannot prove that $2+2=4$ if the determined sceptic refuses to add. And circumstantial evidence, though it may seem to many investigators strong enough to justify belief, will naturally be estimated differently by different minds. Here we come to the psychology of belief, which is perhaps worth glancing at.

Belief is a mental state which depends on many factors. The principal one is the mind that happens to be concerned. When, for instance, we present to a sceptic a psychical case so well evidenced that he is unable to find a satisfactory way out, we are apt to think that he ought to believe, and to expect him to believe; and when he

[1] Presidential address to the S.P.R., by Mr. H. Arthur Smith, "Proceedings," vol. xxiv., p. 342.

doesn't, we reproach him for irrationality and pigheadedness. But we are wrong, through failure to understand the psychology of belief. Hear Professor James on the subject:

"A new idea or a fact which would entail extensive rearrangement of the previous system of beliefs is always ignored or extruded from the mind in case it cannot be sophistically interpreted so as to tally harmoniously with the system. We have all conducted discussions with middle-aged people, overpowered them with our reasons, forced them to admit our contention, and a week later found them back as secure and constant in their old opinion as if they had never conversed with us at all. We call them old fogies; but there are young fogies too. Old-fogyism begins at a younger age than we think. I am almost afraid to say so, but I believe that in the majority of human beings it begins at about twenty-five." [1]

I know that this is so, from my own experience. Many years ago, when I was quite ignorant of spiritualism and psychical research, I was informed by the wife of a friend of mine that she had received a correct diagnosis of her state of health from a medium who purported to be controlled by the spirit of a deceased medical man; further, that the herbs prescribed had cured her. In any ordinary matter I should have accepted her word with the fullest trust; for she and her husband have been intimately known to me for half a lifetime. But, curiously enough, though I did not doubt her integrity, and though I had a high opinion of her intelligence, I was not in the slightest degree impressed by her statements. They went like water off a duck's back, as the saying is. My attention was not permanently arrested; my mind afforded no lodgment to

[1] "Talks to Teachers," pp. 160-1.

the narrative. If I did think of the matter at all, at times other than when she spoke of it, I probably thought, in dim fashion, that perhaps facial appearance had guided the medium to a correct diagnosis (our friend vigorously denied that she had given any verbal indication), that the ailment was a common one and a successful guess therefore not unlikely, and that a small amount of herbal knowledge might explain the cure. My unbelief or indifference was the natural and inevitable consequence of the absence of knowledge or interests wherewith to associate the new information.

After becoming convinced by my own experiments that supernormally-acquired knowledge really was sometimes displayed by mediums, but without having had experience of any kind of psychical phenomena other than ordinary trance speech, I happened to read Sir William Crookes's "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism" and his account of sittings with D. D. Home in the "Proceedings" of the S.P.R. I had by this time developed great interest in the subject; I was no longer indifferent; my psychological attitude was changed. Belief was not much enlarged, for my new belief-acquisition was limited to the one fact of supernormal acquisition of knowledge somehow, and I had no opinion as to whether the spiritualistic claim was true or not.

Now, what was the result of reading Crookes? I confess that at the time it was almost *nil*. And this in spite of the fact that I regarded Sir William Crookes as a sort of Pope in scientific matters—Pope by merit instead of by election—in consequence of my interest in chemistry and my admiration for his research work in that department. If I could have believed the narratives on any man's word it would have been on the word of Sir William

Crookes. Feeling that belief was not produced by his guarantee, I was sure that I should never attain it on the word of any other writer. I was chiefly conscious of a feeling of surprise and staggeredness. I felt bound to admit that the phenomena could not now be left out of court or treated as *a priori* unreal. If Sir William Crookes said that such things were true, surely there must be something in it. Yet the alleged physical phenomena were so utterly out of touch with my other ideas, so incapable of being fitted into any place in my mental fabric, that I was not able to believe, though far from saying that I disbelieved. The content of my belief was not enlarged; my attitude—already respectful and attentive—was not much changed; the net result was a weakening of the negative presumptions which gradually arise from our experience of nature in its normal manifestations, and a bringing of the mind nearer to that ideally judicial state in which evidence is weighed absolutely without prejudice. I need not trace out the further steps—by experience and reading—of my "agnostic's progress" towards belief; for present purposes these illustrations suffice.

So, we must not expect to be believed, when we tell a story of supernormal happenings, unless we know that our hearer's mind has already reached a certain stage. If he is new to the subject, or has not yet got his negative presumptions sufficiently weakened by the bombardment of evidence from various sides, he simply cannot believe us. With the best will in the world he cannot accept our story. He may be an old and dear friend; may be as sure of our veracity as of his own; may have absolute trust in our acumen; yet he cannot believe. The mind in which these new thoughts are to be planted is occupied by enemy forces which repulse the attempted entry.

There is a story of a judge, in a medium-prosecution, who said that the evidence for the genuineness of the phenomena was overwhelming, but that they were impossible, and he must therefore decide against the evidence. The story probably is not true of any judge, but it is something like what many good people do. Our mental fabric has grown into a coherent and symmetrical whole, and we can accept only such new facts as will attach themselves to related facts already in our minds—such new facts as find their affinities already existent in us, and ready to amalgamate with new truth, as an unsaturated solution dissolves more salt, or as an unsatiated carbon atom links itself with other atoms to force a more complex molecule. A mind which does not possess these affinities or link-facts will not be able to believe narratives of supernormal occurrences, however well supported by evidence they may be; and we must not blame it for its inability. Our part is to prepare it for the reception of new truth, by gently breaking down its negative presumptions; by pointing out that with all our boasted advance of knowledge the sum-total of the Possible is infinitely greater than the small specimens of the Actual which orthodox science has thus far succeeded in pigeonholing and labelling; and by presenting the sort of psychical facts that are most easily linked up with the fact-furniture already possessed.

PART II

RELIGIOUS ASPECT, AND CRITICISMS

CHAPTER I

SPIRITUALISM AS A RELIGION

All sects are a reproach to the parent body, from which they have broken away because it failed to meet some one or other of the needs of its members. The parent body resents the secession and is naturally hostile. But the secession is usually a mark of greater life, and the sect flourishes if it does not go to extremes and if it really does provide for anything like a so-to-speak fundamental want. Spiritualism arose as a sect because the existing religious institutions did not sufficiently emphasise the fact of human survival, and did not regard favourably the phenomena which attested it in modern times. We need not blame these institutions overmuch. They were busy with their own affairs, and no doubt they did what their leaders thought right. And there was so much faddism and general chaos in New England religious and social life of the eighteen-forties and eighteen-fifties that a certain conservatism was not only excusable but even desirable.

Spiritualism as a system of belief is not hostile to any except very narrow forms of Christianity. Some critics have denied its right even to the title of religion : but this is a mistake. It is a religion to those who sincerely say it is, and these are many. Moreover, if Myers's pithy remark is true, that "the two elements most necessary for a widely-received religion are a lofty moral code and the attestation of some actual intercourse between the visible

and the invisible worlds,"[1] Spiritualism is quite specially equipped, for it has the second qualification in a degree unique among the churches.

But it has other things also. It is not only a religion, it is a form of Christianity; though some of its adherents prefer not to say this, because by "Christianity" they mean an ecclesiastical and creedal system which, not without reason, they regard as not necessarily good or representative of the mind of Christ. In a pamphlet entitled *The Seven Principles of Spiritualism*, by the Secretary of the Spiritualists' National Union (Mr. Hanson G. Hey), their position is described as follows:

> Spiritualism teaches us that we are spirits now, as much as ever we shall be, though temporarily inhabiting these tenements of clay, for purposes of experience (p. 3).
>
> We have no creed, no dogmas, but we have a set of principles. . . . They are seven in number, and we assert that whoever embraces these principles, assimilates them, and expresses them in his life, needs no other compass to steer his bark o'er the troubled waters of religious, political, social, or industrial life.
>
> They are as follows:
>
> 1. The Fatherhood of God.
> 2. The Brotherhood of man.
> 3. Continuous Existence.
> 4. Communion of Spirits and Ministry of Angels.
> 5. Personal responsibility.
> 6. Compensation and Retribution Hereafter for good or ill done on earth.
> 7. A path of Endless Progression (p. 19).
>
> We assert that no man, however good, deserves absolute bliss for the good he can do in the short space of this earthly career; and no man, however bad, deserves the other extreme. For, after all, man is but finite; therefore, anything he may do here is finite, be it good or ill. . . .

[1] "Classical Essays," p. 209.

> Spiritualism teaches that we enter the next world precisely as we leave this, and begin the round of development where we left off here. In the higher state of being which we enter at the dissolution of the physical frame, we shall retain, to a great extent, recollections of our past life, and shall find that there is an intimate relation between the past, the present, and the future. (p. 33.)

As stated in this pamphlet, Spiritualists have no defined and binding creed, but no doubt something like the above formulation is their generally accepted belief. It will be seen that there is nothing heretical about it. Indeed, it is more Christian than many forms of modern Christianity, for it brings back into prominence those important facts, survival and intercommunion, which were taught by Christ but which, as we have already noted (pp. 3—5), have in these latter days increasingly lapsed into a dim region of uncertainty if not of actual disbelief.

But though there is no creed-shibboleth, and though each Spiritualist society or church is independent, as in the Congregational body of Dissenters, there is, nevertheless, considerable organisation of these units. The Spiritualists' National Union is a powerful body, with a weekly newspaper called *The Two Worlds,* published at 18 Corporation Street, Manchester, and edited by the veteran Mr. J. J. Morse, who has an honourable record of over fifty years' work as Spiritualist lecturer and trance medium.[1] To the S.N.U. belong 180 societies throughout the United Kingdom, and *The Two Worlds* gives regular news of the doings of the most important of them. During 1915-17 the S.N.U. doubled its membership.

The London Spiritualist Alliance is another important

[1] "Leaves From My Life," by J. J. Morse, gives an interesting account of the inception of his mediumship.

body. Formed in 1884 and registered in 1896, it had among its original subscribers to the memorandum and articles of Association the Earl of Radnor, the Hon. Percy Scawen Wyndham, Dr. Alfred Russel Wallace, and many other well-known men; and—lest it should be thought that science and aristocracy are represented while business acuteness is not—we may mention that the Council includes the editor of one of the leading English financial daily papers, while the Navy was represented by the late Admiral W. Usborne Moore until his death in March, 1918. The membership of the L.S.A. forms "a kind of middle class between the almost purely academic activities of the Society for Psychical Research and the propagandist energies of the numerous Spiritualistic societies."[1] It is a useful centre for the Metropolitan area, arranging lectures (some of which have been given by distinguished men like Sir William Barrett and Sir A. Conan Doyle) and regular semi-private meetings at its rooms, 6 Queen Square, Bloomsbury, London, W.C.1, or elsewhere. Its Press organ is the excellent weekly, *Light*, price 2d.

There is also the *International Psychic Gazette* (7d. monthly), 24A Regent Street, London, S.W.1, where also regular lectures are given.

Other smaller organisations exist, more or less closely in touch with one or other of the above-mentioned. Altogether there are at least 350 societies holding regular Sunday services in Great Britain. About forty of these own their places of worship, as a result of much work and self-sacrifice, for the movement, particularly in the north (where the S.N.U. is strongest), is essentially a democratic one.

[1] *Light*, February 6, 1918.

It is noteworthy that Spiritualists, like members of other sects, have done good work during the World War, for in addition to local and individual help they raised a fund of about £1,000 for the sending out of a Motor Ambulance.

At these places of worship it is usual to have a speaker, often "inspirational" or entranced, and a clairvoyant who describes spirit forms which are present. Sometimes the two functions are combined in the same person, as in the case to be quoted. These speakers and clairvoyants vary greatly in both normal and psychic ability, and some of them are about as interesting as the average local preacher at the Wesleyan Chapel of a very small village. Congregations vary accordingly. There was a full house on the occasion now to be reported, Mr. Tyrrell being a first magnitude star among North of England clairvoyants. His only equal is Mr. A. Wilkinson, concerning whose remarkable powers I have written at length elsewhere.[1] It must be borne in mind that we are not concerned with the degree of their education or the quality of their oratory; our interest is in their clairvoyance.

NOTES OF SERVICE AT MILTON SPIRITUALIST CHURCH, IVY ROOMS, MANNINGHAM, BRADFORD, SUNDAY EVENING, SEPTEMBER 30TH, 1917

Speaker: Mr. Tom Tyrrell

The room was crowded, perhaps two hundred and fifty present. Not many men. There had evidently been good results at the afternoon service, and the people seemed expectant.

1 "Psychical Investigations" (Cassell and Co., Ltd.).

The evening service was begun by singing the following hymn :

The world hath felt a quick'ning breath
From heaven's eternal shore,
And souls triumphant over death
Return to earth once more.
For this we hold our jubilee,
For this with joy we sing—
"O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

Our cypress wreaths are laid aside
For amaranthine flowers,
For death's cold wave does not divide
The souls we love from ours.
From pain and death and sorrow free,
They join with us and sing—
"O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

Immortal eyes look from above
Upon our joys to-night,
And souls immortal in their love,
In our glad songs unite.
Across the waveless crystal sea
The notes triumphant ring—
"O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

"Sweet spirits, welcome yet again!"
With loving hearts we cry :
And "Peace on earth, good will to men,"
The angel hosts reply.
From doubt and fear, through truth made free,
With faith triumphant sing—
"O Grave, where is thy victory?
O Death, where is thy sting?"

Next came a prayer by a wounded soldier who assisted Mr. Tyrrell on the platform :

"Out of the vault of matter and unripened experience, we approach Thee, Who art the great controlling and dominating power in the universe. To-night we are desirous for one short hour of approaching and holding communion with those who, having passed through that momentary eclipse called Death, by Thy immutable laws are permitted to return through the minds of mediums and manifest that presence to us. We thank you that in your providential capacity you have so permitted us this privilege, but we are glad that this may be something more than the monopoly of a few—that this can become the common experience of each one of us. We thank you, dear Spirit Friends, for continually coming to aid and abet us. We ask you further to extend that love to us to-night, that we may impart that glorious knowledge which it has been our comfort to receive. We are desirous of impressing upon the minds of all the knowledge that life after death is a certainty. We do this as a means to an end that they will, as a result of that experience, recognise that the phenomena are the finger-post and indication to a higher state of being. We desire, then, individually and co-operatively to endeavour to materialise these ideals which are associated with their lives into this very real world that we live in to-day. We are desirous of doing so much, yet circumstances permit so little. We are desirous of removing poverty, superstition, war, vice and crime, and all those things which menace humanity in their path towards progress.

"That is why Spirits come to us. That is their highest desire and ideal—when, freed from the bondage of time and sense, freed from the struggle for bread and butter and economic circumstances, they seek to come back and co-operate with us to make this world we live in a much better one.

"We also ask you to go amongst those who are in any way in trouble.

"May you all, I implore you, extend that sympathy, that passivity, towards our brother, that you will afford those conditions that will demand the best from him, that by his results we shall have the highest form of manifestation known!"

Then followed another hymn:

Holy ministers of light!
Hidden from our mortal sight,
But whose presence can impart
Peace and comfort to the heart,
When we weep or when we pray,
When we falter on the way,
Or our hearts grow faint with fear,
Let us feel your presence near.

Wandering over ways untrod,
Doubting self and doubting God,
Oft we miss the shining mark,
Oft we stumble in the dark.
When the cross is hard to bear,
When we fail to do and dare,
Make our wounded spirits feel
All your power to bless and heal.

Holy Spirit! quickening all,
On Thy boundless love we call;
Send Thy messengers of light
To unseal our inward sight;
Lift us from our low estate,
Make us truly wise and great,
That our lives, through love, may be
Full of peace and rest in Thee.

After this hymn Mr. Tyrrell was introduced and asked to take charge of the service. He spoke as follows:

"I think that the times I have been to Bradford before

I have made a few friends, and I hope that when I finish to-night I shall have made all of you my friends.

"Wherever we go we find that there is a tremendous inquiry going on about our phenomena. I am not gifted very much with language for speaking purposes. But what I do say as a Lancashire man I believe to be able to make Yorkshire people understand. Nowadays we read of so many attacks on our movement by men who have never spent five minutes investigating the matter. It is astonishing that they will tell men with 20 to 30 years' experience that they are mistaken. Many of you will have read Dr. Mercier's statement. It is all right to be gifted with flowery language and to be a scientist, but scientists sometimes run in the wrong groove, and I am afraid Dr. Mercier has got in the wrong groove. Many of you will have read Bishop" [meaning Father Bernard] "Vaughan's remark: 'There have been more people sent to Hell through Spiritualism than by all the bullets and shrapnel in this war.' There are two questions we might put to Bishop Vaughan, and they are very plain ones. The first is: 'How does the Bishop know that this happened—that so many have gone to Hell through Spiritualism? Has he been there to see for himself?' No, we don't think he has been there. Has anybody returned to tell him so? No, we don't think anybody has returned to tell him so. We don't know what you in Bradford say, but we in Blackburn say: 'He is telling a great big thumping——' Well, their words are valueless even against the *poorest* Spiritualist who has had definite evidence from those passed away.

"There has been a good deal of talk lately about getting the Witchcraft Act repealed. I do not know what they want it repealed for. I believe that those who have the

gift of mediumship—whatever it may be, if it is genuine—have a perfect right to use that phase of mediumship. But it only shows to me that the Church is getting a little bit afraid, so they are collaring the mediums and calling them fortune-tellers. I do not stand here to bolster up any fortune-tellers, the girls who go to find out the colour of their young man's hair, or the young men who go to ask the name of the girl they are going to marry. I think you have all courage to find your own girl without troubling a medium. But I can give you evidences where local mediums have given great consolation to people who have been suffering through this dreadful war and also in many other matters. There are all sorts of people who go to mediums, Church of England, Wesleyans, Primitives. Why? Simply because their parsons cannot give them any consolation. They could not tell me where my father or grandmother was. They said: 'We *hope* they are in Heaven.' Hope is a very beautiful thing, but an ounce of fact is worth a good deal. So they come to mediums—and the police are on their track!

"Just about twelve months before the war, on a Wednesday, I was in a circle at Blackburn and there was a stranger there, a young gentleman. A lady came to him and said: 'Young gentleman, you work in a hot place.' 'No, I don't,' he answered in a snappish voice. She said: 'I see you going into a place with a lot of coal, into a boiler-house.' 'Well,' he said, 'I don't work in a boiler.' The woman counted out two days: 'You will have to be very careful at work on Good Friday,' she said. But the young man answered: 'I wouldn't work on Good Friday for the best master in the world.'

"On Easter Monday I met the same young man. 'Oh, about last Wednesday,' he said: 'the trouble that that

woman prophesied nearly came off. I am a moulder; I work at the shop—not in a boiler. On Thursday the foreman came to me and said: "Jack Robinson is pulling feeders off the boiler on Good Friday when we are not working. What say you to labouring for him?" Well, I thought it would be double pay, and I didn't like to say no or I might get the sack. So I said "All right," though it was the first time I had worked on Good Friday. I had forgotten all about the meeting on Wednesday and was inside the boiler holding out the feeder while the man was pulling out the plates. Suddenly I felt something above me giving way and yelled out to my pal: "I am coming out of this." If it had come down it would have cut my head off!'

"The following is another case of a medium's warning. She said to a gentleman: 'Next Thursday at 10 o'clock you will have to be very careful. I can see you right down in a room—there is a shaft goes all along the wall. Near the end I see sparks flying, see the whole place burst into flames.' The gentleman said later: 'I was down in that room on Thursday at 10 o'clock, but I had quite forgotten the warning until a man suddenly cried out: "Look over there." I looked, and there were sparks flying. I had to ring up right away and have the engine stopped. If it had not been taken in time the whole place would have been burnt down.'

"It is these mediums who are liable to prosecution.

"To-night I am going to try my best in my own humble way to prove that death does not end all. I have not brought these spirits with me. They have come with you. They may be your neighbours; they may be strangers; they may be your loved ones. I simply describe what I see and leave the rest to you. We are not in-

vincible; we sometimes make mistakes, for we cannot always interpret things we see in your surroundings."

CLAIRVOYANCE

MEDIUM (MR. TYRRELL.)—With the gentleman right against the wall I see a gentleman pointing for someone across there. He would be 56 before passing into spirit life. A fairly well-built man. He is surrounded with sea-shells, and I should judge he would be passionately fond of music. Probably his whole time would be spent with music. He wears a dark tweed suit. Not passed away many years. He holds up a cornet and had something to do with a band. His name is Isaac Shepherd. I get Westfield Road, Shipley, with this gentleman. He is bringing a young soldier with him, and he wants me to tell you that this is Mrs. Varley's boy. He says: "Dry the tears from your eyes, Mother." He is glad he has done his duty.

(*Recognised.*)

With you, friend. What a beautiful girl comes there in your surroundings! She is in spirit robes. As I look at you your face is lit up with a beautiful mantle. She is holding over your head such a beautiful basket of flowers, and across the basket these words illuminated: "In affectionate memory of Martha Collins who passed away 9th March, 1898."

(*The person addressed did not know her, but someone else in the audience recognised the name.*)

With this friend here: there is a beautiful lady in your surroundings, about 64-5. She might be older, but would carry age well. I think she was a lady that knew about spiritualism, and she seems to me to have done a

little magnetic healing in her time. She has been passed away some time, for the earth conditions are falling away. Her name is Mrs. Tate.

ANSWER.—I know her.

MEDIUM.—Did she know about spiritualism?

ANSWER.—Yes.

(*Cousin of someone present, but not a former member of the church.*)

MEDIUM.—With our friend here, a beautiful girl. I should take her to be 17 before passing. She was trying to show herself this afternoon, but could not. She is looking round for someone. Her hair flows down her back. She is in spirit robe, and holding up an anchor, and on the anchor are these words: "In affectionate remembrance of Edith (Whitehope or Whiteoak), who passed away October 1st, 1889." A long while back. It is her birthday to-morrow in spirit.

ANSWER.—Yes.

MEDIUM.—She says something about letting her mother know.

ANSWER.—I will let her mother know. The mother was here this afternoon.

MEDIUM.—There is a gentleman here, about 73-4 years old. A well-built gentleman, somewhat red in complexion. I should think he would not have ailed much as a general rule, yet I think he would get a little bit feeble before passing away. He wears a kind of Scotch tweed suit. Full in body, with moustache and beard round here [pointing], and bushy eyebrows. He is surprised to come back here. He would have been surprised if asked to come to a Spiritualist Church in earth life. I get Thomas Rhodes, Daisy Hill Lane. He is showing me now a steel that butchers use; probably a butcher in earth life.

(*Recognised as "This lady's uncle."*)

(Note, Oct. 27th, 1917. *No connection with the church.*)

He is coming with another gentleman, a friend of his, whom I would take to be 63 before passing. Fairly well-built, very religious in earth life. I see a religious aura obtruding from his body, showing that in life he was a very religious man. He is dressed in a beautiful frock-coat suit, with black gloves, and tall shiny hat. This gentleman gives me his name as Mitchell Briggs. He is holding up a hymn-book with "Daisy Hill Primitives" on the back. I think this gentleman will have been a Rechabite, shows regalia on dress.

(*Apparently unrecognised.*)

A young soldier builds up here in your surroundings [pointing]. I don't like describing these soldiers. He looks to be 27-8, but it is hard to judge. Not passed away very long. He comes with another gentleman. His name is John Preston. He says: "I lost my life in the present war, and I would do it over again if I had the chance."

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *The Secretary of the church informs me that John Arthur Preston, aged 27, was killed in May, 1917, and I have verified this by reference to newspaper notices. He was in the Life Guards. He was connected with the Milton Spiritualist Church, and was a member of its Lyceum. He had said that if he was killed he would come back and let them know; and it seems that he announced his death through a private circle, saying: "I have given my life," four days before the news came officially.*)

[Pointing to a lady.] A lady comes here, but she brings a little girl with her. This lady is more anxious about the girl than about herself. There has been much trouble about the passing away of this girl. About two

years old, and been passed away into spirit life a long time, judging from the aura. Her hair is brushed beautifully, and there is a comb pushed into her hair. It is Willy Smith's little girl, Violet Smith. I don't get where they live, but this Willy Smith, from what I gather, knew about spiritualism. The lady is telling me she has met Willy's friend, Willy Scholes from Bowling. He is about 33-4, a very fine young man. He lived at a place called Bowling.

(*I think these were recognised.*)

MEDIUM.—A lady brings a girl to our friend here, a girl about 9 or 10 years old. How bright and beautiful this girl appears! This lady is bringing her over, helping her forward. The child has thrown off all earth conditions, and comes in a spirit robe. Her hair is flowing down her back. It is Mrs. Neal's little girl, Gladys Mary. [Addresses someone in audience.] Do you come from Leeds?

ANSWER.—Yes.

MEDIUM.—I get that this girl passed away at Leeds, and if you will inquire at Leeds you will find out about the girl. Gladys Mary Neal. You have to ask Alice Hesp. She will tell you.

(*Apparently there were people present who came from Leeds and who recognised the child.*)

(Oct. 27th, 1917 : *they afterwards wrote to the Secretary and asked to be informed if anything further came.*)

There is a lady, about 27-8, comes here in your surroundings. I don't know whether she passed in weakness or not, but I get a feeling of a weakened condition, though she has thrown it off now. Sarah Jane Parker, and she lived in Allerton Street, as near as I can catch the sound. She has been passed away perhaps 16 or 17 years.

(*Not recognised.*)

Ask Mrs. Peacock about this young lady, Mrs. Peacock in Upper Woodland Road. Is there a Mrs. Peacock present?

ANSWER.—No.

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *Inquiries have been made, and it is found that a Mrs. Peacock lived in Upper Woodland Road until a few weeks ago. Her present address is not yet traced. No Sarah Jane Parker is known in Allerton Street. This street, also Upper Woodland Road, is half a mile or so from where the meeting was being held.*)

MEDIUM [pointing].—What a comical lady comes there! She is 64-5. A lady that would be a little bit poor in circumstances—and I think a good singer, too. The name I cannot quite catch, though they gave her a nickname and called her "Cockle Sarah."

(*General laughter, and answers of "I knew her."*)

She says: "I am pleased I have met with my dear friend 'Salt Jim.'"

I don't understand that at all.

ANSWER.—That is right.

MEDIUM.—I give it in the rough, just as I get it.

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *Cockle Sarah and Salt Jim were well-known street hawkers and singers in Bradford. Sarah died about* 1910 *and Jim about* 1913. *They were mentioned in local papers at the time of their death. They were friends.*)

There is a lady stands in the midst of you here [pointing.] A lady I would take to be 63-4. A stoutish lady; been passed away a good bit, judging from the aura. She is dressed in black from top to toe—a lady that would always be fond of black, but there is a lot of light in her surroundings. She gives her name as Elizabeth Bolton, and she lived in Western Street.

She says: "I am pleased I have been reunited to my dear son John."

ANSWER.—Yes, that is right.

MEDIUM.—She says also: "We are pleased that we have met with our friend Mr. Magson."

(*General murmur of "right."*)

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *I am informed by the Secretary that John Bolton was a former secretary of the Church and died in* 1913. *His mother was also an attender. She has never been described from the platform before, but often communicates at a private circle. Mr. Magson was another stalwart of the same church.*)

Right behind there is a gentleman stands in the aisle looking round for someone. I would take him to be 54-5. He is fairly well-built, and I think would be a very jovial sort of man in earth life. He wears a navy blue suit. Full in body. Wears a watch chain. He is a bit surprised that he can come back. Another gentleman is helping him along. This gentleman looks to me like a parson, about 67 years old—a very fine man. The first gentleman is Albert Sutcliffe, and the man who looks like a parson is Laurence Lancaster.

Now the first man is holding up a tray with glasses on it, and I see around the glasses written "Unicorn Hotel." This parson is helping him forward. He had been kept down on the earthly plane. He is helping him to rise out of his condition. He says he was pleased that I described his friend Orrell this afternoon.

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *The "Unicorn Hotel" is an hotel in Ivegate, Bradford, an old part of the town. Albert Sutcliffe—correctly described—was a former landlord, well known to my informant. Parson not yet recognised. Orrell not known.*)

There is a lady brings a girl here towards you, Mother [pointing to a lady in audience—he addressed several in this way]. She does not seem to be more than 9 or 10. The lady seems very anxious over this girl, who I think passed away a good bit from here, but she seems as if she wanted the parents to know about this girl. It is Mrs. Ball's little girl, Ivy Ball. The lady is 63-4, and named Mrs. Mitchell. She lived at a place called Yeadon. She has brought the little girl for Mrs. Ball to know about it.

ANSWER.—I know about it.

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *Yeadon is a few miles away. The people are not connected with the church, but someone happened to be present who knew them.*)

MEDIUM.—A boy comes here, about 17 years old, and I think he has been passed away a long while, because he comes very bright and very beautiful. He has thrown off all earth conditions, and comes in spirit robes. He is Laurence Marshall. Had he something to do with lightning?

ANSWER.—His father was killed by lightning.

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *L. M. was one of the church workers.*)

MEDIUM.—He says he is glad he has met with Frank Hodson. Perhaps you understand that better than I do.

(Oct. 27th 1917. *Uncertain; would fit if it were Hobson or Hodgson.*)

With you here, Mother. A young man here looking round for someone. He might be 24, or older than that. A very fine, intellectual young man, and one who was very highly spiritualised in earth life. Not passed away a great length of time. He wears a kind of dark tweed suit, but it is falling away and giving place to spirit robes. He is

throwing a mantle over you, and your face is lit up. Will you ask Mrs. Duxbury, who lives in Westcliffe Road, if she knows this young gentleman? His name is John Edward Holt. [Addresses someone in audience.] Do you know this young man?

ANSWER.—I knew one that went to America, but I don't know whether he has passed on.

MEDIUM.—He has brought another boy with him, quite a young man, about 22. A young man, and he looks as if he had passed away abroad by his skin and his dress. He wears a white dress, as if he had to be in a warmish country. He has a cricket ball in his hands. Very fond of cricket. This friend is Harry Fox. Lived in Bowling Lane, passed away in China. The other boy passed away here.

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *These names are correct, but not much can be ascertained. Harry Fox was a cricket player, and lived in the Bowling district of Bradford, some two or three miles from the meeting-place. He went abroad somewhere.*)

There is a gentleman right at the back, about 72 before passing into spirit life. Well built, and a gentleman who would have had a good deal of physical exercise when in earth life. Not been passed away so very long. Gives me rather a funny name. He is showing me a sporting paper, and on it a picture of this gentleman in cricket flannels, taken when he was very much younger. The name on the picture is Andrew Thackray. This gentleman, when younger, would have been very fond of cricket, and probably played in this town of yours a good many years ago.

It seems that he has been helping this Harry Fox to come forward.

With this lady here. A gentleman seems to be coming towards you. I would take him to be 63-4, but he might be older. Fairly well-built gentleman, one who would have been very active when in earth life. Wears a dark tweed suit, a regalia on it, a Rechabite's regalia, so he was a gentleman connected with the Rechabite movement. He gives me the name of Charles Benn of Eastbrook Lane. He had something to do with the Corporation. He is showing me a photograph, on which is written "Corporation Health Department." He was a very religiously disposed man, too.

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *Not recognised. But there is a Corporation sub-office in Eastbrook Lane.*)

There is a young man here, about 34-5. Been passed away about five years. He is looking round for someone up here on the platform [the room was crowded and seats had been placed on the platform]. He passed away very suddenly. He is anxious for those he has left behind. He gives the name of Harry Smith. Somebody belonging to him lived in Wellington Street, No. 13. I am rather surprised that some of the Spiritualists should not know him. He wants his wife to know.

ANSWER.—Our late President was Harry Smith.

MEDIUM.—There is a Mr. Armitage with him.

(*Mr. Armitage and Wellington Street evidently not known.*)

(Oct. 27th, 1917. *A curious incident. The names of presidents of Spiritualist societies may be assumed to be known to mediums, but the "Wellington Street, No. 13" seems possibly evidential. It will be noted that he was stated to be looking round for someone on the platform. I am to-day informed by the Secretary, Mr. Holden, who was not at the meeting, being unavoidably out of town,*

that he once had great difficulty in collecting a debt at 13, Wellington Street, for coal, on behalf of Mr. Smith. This was a matter not likely to be known to the medium or indeed to anyone present, and it seems probable that Mr. Smith was looking round for Mr. Holden in order to give him test evidence of his identity. The medium, being given an address, naturally thought that Mr. Smith or someone belonging to him lived there, which is not so.

The Mr. Armitage is unrecognised.)

A lady comes here in your surroundings [pointing] about 63-4. Been passed into spirit life a good number of years. Fairly well built. A jovial sort, and one that would have been a very good judge of character. She places her hands on your shoulders. She comes very close in your life. Name—Amelia Murgatroyd. She has met her friend, Elizabeth Hale, who would live at No. 80, Cartwright Terrace.

(*The person addressed did not recognise the people, but someone else said: "I know them, they were friends."*)

MEDIUM.—They want to be remembered to Mr. and Mrs. C.

ANSWER.—Yes, that is all right.

MEDIUM.—They don't forget, they don't forget.

See, a boy comes in your surroundings. He looks to me to be about 17 or 18, and I think there will have been a good deal of sorrow over the passing away of this boy. A lady brings this boy, and she wants the parents to know about him. Whether he passed away in weakness or not, I don't know. He is a very beautiful boy; she is telling me that it is Herbert Ernest. There is somebody belonging to him called Seth. I cannot get along with it. Do you know anybody called Seth and Mary that had a boy called Herbert Ernest Hobson?

ANSWER.—You are right, friend.

MEDIUM.—They want you to know.

Right in the corner there [pointing.] I don't know what to make of this at all. It is a youth, I should take him to be about 18. There is a gentleman with this youth; and I have a very curious feeling. I rather think this youth will have been killed from the shock. Now he comes and shows me. He is without jacket, and his clothes are covered with colour. He is holding out his hands, and there is a reddish dye on them. He may have worked in a dye works. I feel I would fall over. He may have met with his death in a dye works. It is Mrs. Miller's boy, William Henry Miller; lived in Valley Place, and I think he would be killed in a dye works. Not more than four or five years ago, as far as I can see in the surroundings. This gentleman comes with him. He is Henry Mitchell, and he used to belong to Yeadon. He is helping the boy forward.

(*All correct, except that Henry Mitchell is unrecognised. Mr. Holden, my informant, knew William Henry Miller. Leg hurt at dye works, blood poisoning, died about* 1911. *Valley Dye Works.*)

ANSWER.—I know this man.

MEDIUM.—He is glad he has met with his old friend, Mary Leach.

Perhaps now you will sing a verse. It is getting very hot.

(*The following hymn was sung*):

How pure in heart and sound in head,
With what divine affections bold,
Should be the man whose thought would hold
An hour's communion with the dead.

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
The spirits from their golden day,
Except, like them, thou too canst say,
"My spirit is at peace with all."

They haunt the silence of the breast,
Imagination calm and fair,
The memory like a cloudless air,
The conscience as a sea at rest.

But when the heart is full of din,
And doubt beside the portal waits,
They can but listen at the gates,
And hear the household jar within.

—*Tennyson.*

MEDIUM.—A boy and a girl come here, boy about 24 and girl about 16, but I think you will have to carry your minds back over twenty years to find these two. He is a very beautiful young man, seems quite girlish in appearance, and I think he would pass away with a weakness. The girl has her hair flowing down, and is dressed in spirit robes. She passed away with a fever. They give me the names of Charlie Craven and Hilda Smith, and they passed away at Leeds over twenty years ago. She is telling me that his mother was Ann Craven.

(*At first these were unrecognised, but afterwards some of the people from Leeds recollected the girl's mother, who lives at Blackpool, or used to.*)

They have brought another little girl with them, called Annie Bentley. Somebody belonging to the girl has had something to do with gardening.

That is all I can get. I am afraid there will be some disappointment, but I have described things as best I can. It is not necessary to come here for evidence. Most of you have someone in your own home who is susceptible

to spirit influences, and you can get better evidence at home. I thank you all very kindly for your attention.

Another hymn followed, then the Benediction and dismissal.

The evidential value of public clairvoyance incidents such as those reported above, is extremely difficult to estimate. It would be almost *nil* if the medium were a local man, for he might possess all the knowledge shown, even though he might be unaware of it. The data might have been acquired casually and stored up in his subliminal, giving rise to pseudo-evidential hallucinations. But it happens that Mr. Tyrrell lives at Blackburn (Lancashire), and seems to have visited Bradford only about three or four times in his life. He says he is not in touch with Bradford people or affairs, and does not see Bradford newspapers. Moreover, he travels extensively, as does Mr. Wilkinson, giving clairvoyance in innumerable towns; and both seem to be pretty uniformly successful wherever they go, even when they pay a visit to a place they know nothing about. In saying this I am not relying on what they say; indeed, they are very modest about their own gifts. I am relying on information from friends in various towns, who have attended the meetings.

Further, my private sittings with Mr. Wilkinson have convinced me of the genuineness of his psychic faculty, and with Mr. Tyrrell also I have had fairly good evidence, particularly at a sitting the report of which has not been published. Consequently, I find it easy to accept, provisionally, a supernormal and even a face-value interpretation of this public clairvoyance; while agreeing that it would not be in itself sufficient to produce conviction, except, perhaps, to some of those present who can feel

reasonably sure as to the extent of the medium's knowledge of their affairs.

In addition to these Sunday evening meetings there is usually a Sunday afternoon meeting of similar character, and about 300 societies have a Sunday-school ("Lyceum") for the children, conducted on sensible and interesting lines. There are drills and marches and calisthenics, with hymn-singing, recitation, reading of good science primers, and much judicious inculcation of high moral and spiritual teaching. The aim throughout is to draw out and develop the pupil, encouraging healthy mental growth in many directions. To one reader at least, the "Lyceum Manual" came as a pleasant surprise. Other sects might learn much from it.

For example, there is the Golden Chain series of recitations. These are a set of sentences on Brotherhood, the Beatitudes, the Nature of Man, Wisdom, the Word of God, the Religion of Health, the Teachings of Spiritualism, and so forth. They are arranged in short sentences to be read alternately by the Conductor and the whole Lyceum. A few are given by way of illustration:—

CONDUCTOR.—What is the commandment of Brotherhood?

LYCEUM.—Thou shalt love thy neighbour as thyself.

CONDUCTOR.—What is the law of Angels?

LYCEUM.—All men are my brothers; all women are my sisters; all children are my children.

CONDUCTOR.—What does love require?

LYCEUM.—Instruction for the ignorant, sympathy for the fallen, rest for the weary, kindness to the unthankful, succour to the distressed, forgiveness to the erring.

CONDUCTOR.—Ever hold in remembrance this talis-

manic sentence, making it a part of your being: "My country is the universe; my home is the world; my religion to do good; my heaven wherever a human heart beats in sympathy with mine." (*Thomas Paine.*)

CONDUCTOR.—What is the first lesson in fraternal love?

LYCEUM.—Faith in our fellow-beings; faith that there is in every human soul a desire to be good.

CONDUCTOR.—What does this faith teach us?

LYCEUM.—Charity, which covereth a multitude of sins; that sins follow from weakness and imperfection, and we pity where we cannot blame.

CONDUCTOR.—What is the earthly body?

LYCEUM.—It is a moving, living house, the earthly temple of the spirit, which dwells in it for a time on earth to learn the lessons of this life.

CONDUCTOR.—What becomes of the spirit after death?

LYCEUM.—If good, it lives in the bright Spirit World, in which it has a beautiful and lovely home. If bad, it has to dwell in spiritual darkness until it is purified of its sins.

CONDUCTOR.—Do our spirit brothers, sisters, mothers, fathers, and friends ever return to our homes?

LYCEUM.—Yes, they come to watch over those they love, and guard them from evil and danger, and guide them through life.

CONDUCTOR.—What is the spirit?

LYCEUM.—A self-conscious being in human form, manifesting affection and intelligence.

CONDUCTOR.—What is its destiny?

LYCEUM.—Everlasting life and everlasting ascension through endless realms of thought and action.

CONDUCTOR.—Manifest *Temperance* in all things.

LYCEUM.—Whether physical, mental, moral, affectional, or religious.

CONDUCTOR.—Give *Justice* to all creatures that be.

LYCEUM.—Justice being the exercise of precisely the same rules of life, conduct, thought, or speech that we would desire to receive from others.

CONDUCTOR.—Show *Gentleness* in speech and act.

LYCEUM.—Never heedlessly wounding the feelings of others by harsh words or deeds; never hurting or destroying aught that breathes, save for the purpose of sustenance or self-defence.

CONDUCTOR.—Speak *Truth* in every word or thought spoken or acted.

LYCEUM.—But reserve harsh or unpleasant truths where they would needlessly wound the feelings of others.

CONDUCTOR.—Exercise *Charity* in thought, striving to excuse the failings of others.

LYCEUM.—Yes, and charity in speech, veiling the failings of others; charity in deeds, wherever, whenever, and to whomsoever the opportunity offers.

CONDUCTOR.—In *Almsgiving* be generous.

LYCEUM.—Visiting the sick and comforting the afflicted in every shape that our means admit of, and the necessities of our fellow-creatures demand.

CONDUCTOR.—Exhibit Self-sacrifice at all times.

LYCEUM.—Wherever the interests of others are to be benefited by our endurance.

CONDUCTOR.—How is it [Spiritualism] a religion?

LYCEUM.—Because it gives us a juster conception of the Creator and His works, prompts us to act up to our highest sense of duty, and stimulates spiritual growth and purity of life, thus preparing us for the immortality which it proves.

CONDUCTOR.—What is the spiritual body?

LYCEUM.—The spiritual body is an organised form, evolved by and out of the physical body, having corresponding organs and development, and resembles the physical body.

CONDUCTOR.—Can you tell anything further of the spiritual body?

LYCEUM.—It outlives the change called death, and becomes the external body of the spirit.

CONDUCTOR.—What is the innermost spirit?

LYCEUM.—The intelligent, ethereal, and immortal part of man, the life itself, a spark from the Divine.[1]

[1] "The Lyceum Officers' Manual."

CHAPTER II

SPIRITUALISM AS A RELIGION (*Continued*)

APPARENTLY spiritualist societies suffer from one disorder which is prevalent among the Nonconformist sects—that of too-frequent splits and the founding of small competitive societies. A spiritualist writer, Mr. J. Rutherford, said in *The Two Worlds* of October 12th, 1917:

> A very large number of Spiritualistic Societies are formed after the amœba plan. This is particularly the case on Tyneside. In South Shields, for instance, there are five Societies, and, curious to relate, two are next door to each other. . . . The development of little hole-and-corner meetings arises, in most cases, in this way: A Society is established, and with, say, an able President, does some useful work. Ultimately, however, an individual, well weighted with vanity and little wisdom, aspires to the office of President. A clique is gathered round him, and unless the clique obtain their object, a "division" is the result.

There is a good deal of human nature, evidently, with its inevitable party politics, in spiritualists as in other folk. And this human or secular element is rather strongly present in the atmosphere of their meetings. The good people are friendly and chatty, but a moderately orthodox stranger would probably feel that the devotional element is rather small. The proceedings are interesting—except when a speaker is long-winded and platitudinous—and everyone is affable; but there is a lack of dignity and reverence. This, however, may be the fault of the stranger,

who has been brought up on vaulted roofs and surpliced choirs and "storied windows richly dight." An average Congregationalist will perhaps not feel this secularity to a painful extent, and a village Wesleyan may not feel it at all. And anyhow it is perhaps better than the other extreme, which often becomes mere dead ceremonialism.

At spiritualist meetings a trance control or inspirational speaker will sometimes hold forth with surprising fluency at incredible length—the Secretary of the Spiritualists' National Union once backed the late W. J. Colville to talk "till this time next week, without intervals for meals" —yet with a dullness and inanity that would drive any but a very tolerant audience mad. Spiritualists certainly have the virtue of patience, though there was an article in *The Two Worlds* in 1917 which indicated that at least one spiritualist was coming to the end of his tether, for he protested against the custom of having speakers of this class, urging that mediumship, to be useful, must be mainly evidential.

It is probable that many "mediums" who give trance addresses and supposed clairvoyance at spiritualist meetings are people in whom there is a dissociation of consciousness, and that there is no external spirit-agency at all. The mere fact of an eloquent trance address proves nothing, for the same thing may be observed in the case of many a hypnotised subject; and even when "spirits" are seen, named, and described, we cannot be sure that there is anything supernormal about the phenomena unless there is something said which the medium could never have known and which cannot reasonably be attributed to chance. In a case known to me, a local medium gave me (in trance), the names, addresses, and descriptions of several people who had died a year or so before, in towns

not far away. All the information turned out correct, and I am ready to believe that the medium did not *consciously* know it. If he had been fraudulent he would have posted himself up about my own deceased relatives, which would have been a very easy matter. The people he did describe were unknown to me, and I had never even heard of them. Probably he had read or heard of them, and the trance-control (a secondary personality) reproduced the knowledge in spiritistic form, somewhat as we may dream that we are seeing and talking to some deceased person whom we have heard of but have not known.

Presumably it would be a wise policy for spiritualist societies to get their members to prepare papers and give addresses with their own wits, thus educating both themselves and their hearers; instead of encouraging the flow of platitudinous or almost meaningless verbiage which, whether it comes from a medium's subliminal or from a discarnate spirit, can hardly be helpful to anybody, and must be very bad for the minds of most hearers.

Among spiritualists there is also much holding of private circles, with results probably both good and bad. Many a materialist has been convinced in this way, and indeed many inquirers have first begun to take the matter seriously because of results so obtained, becoming spiritualists in consequence. Real and important faculty may be developed by these means, and the procedure is at least scientific, in the sense of being experimental. On the other hand, these matters are still so little understood that we cannot say with confidence that this promiscuous sitting for development, of earnest but perhaps uneducated people, is without danger. In many persons, without question, it favours the oncoming of automatic phenomena —twitching of the muscles, leading up to automatic

writing or speech, and sometimes trance—and we know too little about these dissociative changes to feel sure that they are always harmless. In defence it may be urged, with truth so far as my knowledge goes, that the dissociations induced by spiritualistic practices come on only when sought, and are therefore not comparable with split-personality cases such as that of Miss Beauchamp (not a spiritualist) in which a useful life was spoilt until the erratic multiple selves were again integrated by hypnotic suggestion.[1] But, in at least some cases of trance-control, there is no reason to believe the control to be other than a subliminal fraction of the automatist's mind, and unless some supernormal faculty is shown there is probably no benefit for anyone. These controls are often fluent enough, but torrents of words and much repetition are useless and tedious if the sense is shallow. Even Mr. J. J. Morse refers humorously to a certain "medium" who "lectured for some time, and culminated in a tremendous outburst of either noise or eloquence."[2]

And as to private dark sittings for physical phenomena, somewhat the same is to be said. We know little of the psychological conditions set up by long sitting in the dark. If physical phenomena are tried for at all, it is desirable to have some light, as with Dr. Crawford's Belfast circle; and, even then, there seems no particular point in physical phenomena alone, except as providing a problem for the physicist and psychical researcher. A table or other object may move in some inexplicable way, but that is no proof of "spirits"; the energy is supplied

[1] "The Dissociation of a Personality," by Dr. Morton Prince. *See* also the Doris Fischer case in recent volumes of "Proceedings" of the American Society for Psychical Research.

[2] "Leaves From My Life," p. 9.

from physical matter—mainly the medium's and sitters' bodies, apparently—and it is only through evidential messages conveyed by the phenomena that spirit-agency can reasonably be inferred. Without such messages, a physical-phenomena sitting may be only a demonstration of the action of a new physical force, and the performance is usually exhausting for the medium. So, on the whole, it would seem that private circles, except when held for investigation and by qualified persons, are doubtfully good; though the present writer cheerfully admits that his knowledge is insufficient to justify any dogmatism in the matter. And he also admits that his own best experiences in physical phenomena have been with a private sensitive (not a spiritualist) and not in the dark, and it seems probable that psychic faculty is commoner than is supposed.

These remarks and criticisms are made in a friendly spirit. There may be much crudity and credulity among spiritualists, but they have the root of the matter. They have found the facts, have clung to them, have forced the learned world to attend; and we owe them praise and respect. Any crudity and credulity that we find are excusable. Let those—as Myers says—who mock at the weaknesses of Spiritualism "ask themselves to what extent either orthodox religion or official science has been at pains to guard the popular mind against losing balance upon contact with new facts, profoundly but obscurely significant. Have the people's religious instructors trained them to investigate for themselves? Have their scientific instructors condescended to investigate for them?"[1] The fact is that for the most part both religious and scientific instructors, in the early spiritualistic days particularly,

[1] "Human Personality," vol. ii., pp. 304-5.

failed to do anything but ignorantly condemn. They have sinned and done wickedly therein; and it ill becomes any of us who are open to that condemnation to cast sneers at the spiritualists who have found truth which we failed to recognise. We may legitimately criticise, after due study, but the thing calls for seriousness, not offhand dismissal.

A movement begun as Spiritualism began, among earnest but untutored folk, must take some time to present itself respectably to our sophisticated eyes. It begins with no advantages of Gothic cathedrals or stately liturgy or venerated tradition. Its truth is indeed an old truth, but the emphasis of it is new. So with Christianity itself. The Early Christians were mostly of the people, and were despised; but their inner force began a new era and lifted man a step nearer the divine. The Nonconformists, after the Restoration, worshipped in barns at midnight or in the small hours of the morning, with the dragoons ever on their trail. Their faith was real enough—as is evidenced by the sufferings they endured—in spite of unimpressive surroundings. Religion is never dignified in externals at the start—it is always born in a "stable" or other lowly place, there being no room for it in the busy, successful, conservative "inn" of the world,—but it has its own dignity of sincerity and earnestness. To many, Spiritualism is a real religion; not the mere fact of belief in survival and communication, but the whole body of belief, which is perhaps nearer to that of the Early Christians than is the Christianity of some of the orthodox churches. It is not a worship of spirits, any more than Wesleyanism is a worship of John Wesley. Neither is it merely communication with spirits. As already stated, its first principle is the fatherhood of God, and this is a religious principle.

We must not make the mistake of regarding the feature which differentiates it from other sects as its only feature. Whether spiritualism will gather external dignity and freeze into a respectable orthodoxy or whether it will leaven and merge into existing forms, producing better ones, remains for the future to show—and, in any case, will rest with its adherents.

Writing in England and wishing to keep to the main line of development—for it is in England that the subject has received most attention from qualified investigators since 1870 or so—I have made no attempt to describe the state of spiritualistic affairs in other countries. To deal with modern American spiritualism alone another volume and a more competent writer would be required. The regrettable thing in connexion with it seems to be that, though there is an American Society for Psychical Research (New York) with the able secretaryship of Dr. J. H. Hyslop, formerly professor of Logic and Ethics at Columbia University, the subject as a whole has been exploited so much by advertising fortune-tellers—mostly, no doubt, mere charlatans and money-grabbers—that educated people have held aloof.[1] *The Progressive Thinker* of Chicago is the chief U.S.A. spiritualistic paper. In France there are a few spiritualistic journals and much private psychical activity, but no strong organisation. (The books of Allan Kardec are the main authorities, and spiritism is reincarnationist.) The same holds true of Italy, where attention has been mainly given to physical phenomena in consequence of the mediumship of the Neapolitan Eusapia Palladino. In

[1] Mr. J. J. Morse found a surprising and repellent amount of advertising by "mediums and others who were not." "Leaves From My Life," p. 34.

Germany Spiritualism has not flourished, occultism and Theosophy—under Dr. Rudolf Steiner's leadership—having been apparently more to the Teutonic taste. In Spain and the South American republics there is a great deal of private Spiritualism, but little organisation, and the same applied to Russia before the War. In Melbourne, Australia, there is a good Spiritualist paper—*The Harbinger of Light*—and a fair amount of interest.

In New Zealand Spiritualism was forging ahead before the War, with many societies holding Sunday services all over the Dominion, and a paper called *The Message of Life*. Latterly there has been a police campaign against mediums, some of whom have been fined and even imprisoned.' It may be that they deserved it—if of the ordinary fortune-telling kind who are, of course, *not* mediums—and it may be necessary to protect credulous people from visiting them.

But the law, both in New Zealand and nearer home, is in great need of amendment. It does not recognise the existence of psychic faculty, and therefore ignores real facts, and punishes on a basis of ignorance. The Spiritualists' National Union is raising a fund for agitation against the old Acts which embody this ignorant incredulity, and has collected about £1,000. In the United States there is more freedom, with results both good and bad. It is a difficult problem. Some classification, and registration of tested and genuine mediums, seem desirable. Sometimes the police send spies (paid agents) who pretend to be genuinely seeking communication with some departed friend or desiring other help from the medium. In a recent case in America it was decided that this kind of dishonest trapping was inadmissible; and indeed an

[1] *Two Worlds*, March 1, 1918, p. 66.

enlightened magistrate at Huddersfield, in Yorkshire, has, I find as I write this, discharged a medium who was trapped in this way, allowing the defence that there was no proof of intent to deceive, the defendant being a spiritualist and genuinely believing in her own alleged faculty.[1] All the same, the majority of these supposed mediums are probably self-deceived, or may trade on a slender basis of occasional clairvoyant gleams; and it is not desirable that the general public should resort to them promiscuously. Some of them, for instance, predict the death of the sitter within a given time—this occurred in my case once—and to some people this is disturbing and might even tend to its own fulfilment. However, this sort of prediction is probably exceptional; given only by a foolish woman here and there.

During the War many inquiries have no doubt been about missing men, and most of the mediums probably tend to the hopeful side and may consequently give some comfort in specially trying circumstances. Most sitters go in the hope of getting into communication with sons or husbands killed, and many succeed and derive great help and comfort; but genuine and strong mediumship of this kind is available to the public only in London, and is rare and uncertain even there. The few good mediums elsewhere in the country confine themselves to religious and semi-religious work in their own sect, giving addresses and clairvoyance at the societies' places of worship, mostly on a peripatetic system.

[1] *Yorkshire Observer,* March 12, 1918.

CHAPTER III

MATERIALISTIC AND OTHER OBJECTIONS

GREAT BRITAIN is a free country, so far as opinion is concerned, and people may think what they like. Accordingly, many people think that Spiritualism is all fraud or hallucination. No harm is done so long as they confine themselves to thinking, but unfortunately these good folk are usually far from silent. In fact they talk and write more than they think. Least of all do they *investigate*. Their negations are *a priori*. They know, without experiment, what can and what cannot happen. The scholastics said there were no spots in the sun, because the sun was a perfect orb and could have no spots. They would not look through Galileo's telescope. And the planetary orbits must be circular, because circles were dignified and perfect things. These scholastics first decided what they thought ought to be, then said it was so. Similarly with the materialistic or negatively-dogmatic anti-spiritualists —for a few of them are not exactly materialists. The truth is that it is precisely the things which, according to accepted theories, ought not to happen, that we should be on the look-out for, as Sir John Herschel has said. They are valuable clues to new discoveries. But there are still many who have not reached that point of wisdom, even among the philosophers.

Said Professor Münsterberg, not long ago, of trance-mediumship: "The facts as they are claimed do not exist, and never will exist, and no debate makes the situation

better."[1] Says Mr. Frederic Harrison: "To talk to us of mind, feeling, and will continuing their functions in the absence of physical organs and visible organisms, is to use language which, to us at least, is pure nonsense."[2]

As to Professor Münsterberg, the attitude exemplified is exactly that of the savage who could not believe that water could ever become solid, as he was assured that it did in cold countries; also of those who could not believe in the Antipodes because people there would be head downwards and would fall off. In such cases, the disbelievers are merely ignorant.

Mr. Harrison's remark is less naïvely absurd, though it seems to connote an atheism which is now not much held; for "mind, feeling, and will" must be attributed to God if there is one, and He has no "visible organism"—unless the physical universe is supposed to be His body, which is a tenable theory, as we shall see later, but which Mr. Harrison would not accept. The Positivist bars metaphysics from the start, and thus sweeps God and souls away with complete satisfaction to himself. To him they are "nonsense." But their abolition raises more difficulties than their retention. Souls are coming into fashion again. The materialism which cannot conceive of soul except as associated with and indeed—as some have said—produced by a brain, is bad philosophy. As Professor James pointed out in his admirable Ingersoll lecture on Human Immortality, "function" may be of different kinds. The trigger of a crossbow exercises a permissive function, removing an obstacle to the string's motion. A lens or prism exercises a transmissive function, allowing light to pass through. Our brains may be prisms

[1] "Psychology and Life," p. 253.

[2] "Philosophy of Common Sense," p. 217.

allowing the manifestation of part of our total consciousness, as prisms make visible only part of the ray. If the materialist asks how brains can be conceived as transmitting consciousness, we ask him how they can be conceived as producing it. Function is, strictly speaking, concomitant variation only; anything added about production or transmission is metaphysics. But the transmissive idea is preferable to the productive, because it fits psychical-research facts better, and for philosophical reasons also. It provides a wider scheme than materialism, and is supported by practically all philosophic and religious teachers. It is the root-principle, for instance, of Plato and the Upanishads.

But here, as already said, we get into metaphysics. This the spiritualist tries to avoid. Instead of arguing about whether a spirit can or cannot exist without "organs" or a visible organism, he adopts the more scientific mode of beginning with phenomena and reasoning upwards. "Here," he says, "is what happens. Make all the tests you like, in order to be sure that the things do happen. Record them carefully, along with the conditions. Then try various explanatory hypotheses. Many of the facts can be explained fairly satisfactorily without going much beyond recognised agencies; but if you investigate long, and with an open mind, willing to follow where the evidence leads, you will probably find that no theory except the spiritistic one will cover all the facts."

Does not this sound more sane and more sensible than the dogmatic negations which non-investigators utter so fluently? To take another instance, a reviewer (wisely and modestly remaining anonymous) in the *English Review* (October, 1910, page 563), says:

"'Surely no baser delusion ever obtained dominance

over the weak mind of man.' So Tyndall; and there is something refreshing about his downright and sledge-hammer style when we compare it with the trimmed and guarded utterances of modern inquirers."[1]

There certainly is. There was also something refreshing about the downright and sledgehammer way in which Stephenson was ridiculed when he thought he could make an engine run thirty miles an hour, on rails. Similar refreshment may be had by reading about the absurd idea (as it was then thought) of lighting houses by sending a sort of smoke into them through tubes. In like manner hypnotism was both laughed at and denied, the orthodox doctors saying, without any first-hand knowledge, that Dr. Esdaile's and Dr. Elliotson's subjects, who went through major operations in the sleep, must have been shamming anæsthesia. Nay, even in a less extraordinary matter, and with the backing of a man like Sir Humphry Davy, the discovery of the properties of nitrous oxide was ignored for half a century; and it took nearly the same time to convince anthropologists that worked flints were found along with the bones of extinct animals. McEnery's discoveries at King's Hole Cavern, Torquay, were laughed at, but were fully confirmed later, with much more besides. Every new discovery and invention has had to run the like gauntlet of ridicule, more or less. We have now learnt sense enough to be less dogmatic than formerly, and the real leaders in science are open-minded, but there is still much ignorance and negative dogmatism. On this point Huxley has some wise words:

Strictly speaking, I am unaware of anything that has a right to the title of an "impossibility," except a contradiction in

[1] Review of Podmore's "Newer Spiritualism."

terms. There are impossibilities logical, but none natural. A "round square," a "present past," "two parallel lines that intersect," are impossibilities, because ideas denoted by the predicates *round, present, intersect,* are contradictory of the ideas denoted by the subjects, *square, past, parallel.* But walking on water, or turning water into wine, or procreation without male intervention, are plainly not impossibilities in this sense.[1]

As Andrew Lang humorously remarks: "To the horror of some of his admirers, Mr. Huxley would not call the existence of demons and demoniacal possession 'impossible.'"[2] Mr. Lang himself, however, expresses his "abhorrence and contempt"[3] for Spiritualism, of which he confessedly had no first-hand knowledge; and he says elsewhere that he would not willingly find himself in the company even of Mrs. Piper. He did once find himself in the presence of a professional medium, but it was not his fault. It was an accident, as he was careful to explain in his Presidential Address to the S.P.R., evidently with a whimsical perception of his own fastidiousness. Perhaps if he had risked the adventure of a few deliberate sittings he might have found the mediums less terrible than he feared; though it is undeniable that some individuals of the species would have bored him pretty badly.

Mr. Edward Clodd is another of these *a priorists*. In the *Strand Magazine* for July, 1917, he says that the inception of Spiritualism was in fraud, that its history is a record of the detection of "sorry rascals," that their dupes are "impelled by the wish to believe," and so forth. This imputation of prejudice comes queerly from one who is so obviously suffering from that complaint. He has made

[1] "Science and Christian Tradition," p. 197.
[2] "The Making of Religion," p. 296.
[3] "Cock Lane and Common Sense," p. 22.

up his mind, and has made it up so hermetically that it is impermeable to evidence; or, rather, like certain membranes which exhibit the phenomenon of osmosis, it is permeable to one sort only—the sort which fits Mr. Clodd's wishes. And this sort is seized on without examination. Mr. Clodd repeats, for example, the old story that Mrs. Piper once "confessed" that she had had no communications from spirits.[1] If Mr. Clodd means to imply that she confessed fraud, he is mistaken. She expressed the quite legitimate opinion that her phenomena might be due to telepathy from some incarnate person. The article in the *New York Herald* (October, 1901) makes no suggestion of fraud, and refers to Mrs. Piper in respectful terms. The use of the word "confession" by hostile critics is a skilful way of suggesting fraud, but the innuendo is baseless. Full details are to be found in the *Journal* of the S.P.R., vol. x., pp. 142-8-50. Moreover, the evidentiality of the case does not depend on Mrs. Piper's opinion. She was in trance at the sittings, and knew nothing of what happened except what she was told afterwards. Long and stringent investigations were carried out, as we have already seen, by Dr. Hodgson and others, and the evidence is there for anyone to read. If critics will meet it fairly, instead of making unworthy and baseless insinuations—which, indeed, are irrelevant—they would be more likely to help in the discovery of truth, for scientific investigators are always ready to give up their theory if a more reasonable one can be supplied.

Moreover, Mr. Clodd's language is regrettably emotional, betraying violent prejudice. He says that "the bias-ruled attitude of the inquirers is wholly uncritical; the power of suggestion paralyses them; they are prepared to

[1] "The Question: If a man die, shall he live again?" pp. 191-2, 297.

see and hear and believe all they are told." And "all is nauseating, frivolous, mischievous, spurious drivel" (*Strand,* page 54).

Compare this hysterical language with the quiet sentences of the official leaflet on the aims of those inquirers who make up the Society for Psychical Research, and the tolerant sanity of the final note, all of which are quoted *in extenso* in the seventh chapter of Part I. (pp. 70-2).

Which shows a "bias-ruled attitude"—Mr. Clodd or the S.P.R.? Which uses frantic adjectives, and which a calm and judicial phrasing? The answer may safely be left to the reader. Finally, how much investigation has Mr. Clodd done? He fortunately informs us himself. He attended one séance, about fifty years ago, but has forgotten most of what happened. (Letter to *International Psychic Gazette,* April, 1918.) Apparently he did not even take notes! Thus equipped, then, he sets out to controvert the opinions of those who have investigated for thirty or forty years.

Again, in his book, "The Question: If a man die, shall he live again?" he shows that Spiritualism has existed in all ages and places, and apparently makes the curious inference that therefore it must be untrue. Another anthropologist, Mr. Andrew Lang, himself no spiritualist, adduced precisely the same facts as suggesting that there is likely to be *some* truth in the similar modern phenomena. But Mr. Clodd, secure in the knowledge which his partly-forgotten sitting of fifty years ago gave him, knows well that these things cannot be, and that all believers in them are "bias-ruled and uncritical." And though Mr. Clodd makes much use of the negative arguments and assumptions of Mr. Podmore, who as arch-sceptic to the

S.P.R. served a useful purpose as brake, we must remember that even Mr. Podmore admitted the fact of telepathy, and in his last book went even farther, saying: "Taken as a whole, the correspondences are so numerous and precise, and the possibility of leakage to Mrs. Piper through normal channels so effectually excluded, that it is impossible to doubt that we have here proof of a supernormal agency of some kind—either telepathy by the trance intelligence from the sitter or some kind of communication with the dead."[1] The spiritistic interpretation, it will be noted, is seriously stated as an alternative.

Another critic, of indubitable scientific eminence and commanding our respect as to his opinions on subjects which he has studied, is Sir E. Ray Lankester, who has informed us that "modern biologists (I am glad to be able to affirm) do not accept the hypothesis of 'telepathy' advocated by Sir Oliver Lodge, nor that of the intrusions of disembodied spirits pressed upon them by others of the same school."[2] Whether Sir Ray Lankester can speak for "modern biologists" *en bloc* may be doubted, for one remembers a few who would probably object; but, even if he could, it does not matter. A biologist has a right to an opinion on his own speciality and on other subjects

[1] "The Newer Spiritualism," p. 222.

[2] "The Kingdom of Man," p. 65. It is amusing to note that another Rationalist, Mr. Joseph McCabe, evidently feeling himself in peril between the Scylla of telepathy and the Charybdis of Spiritualism, chose telepathy as the lesser evil, saying that the evidence for it is "satisfactory." (*Literary Guide,* March, 1916.) Later, however, being confronted with Sir Ray Lankester's opinion, Mr. McCabe distractedly made a half-recantation of his telepathy pronouncement, and now seems to be in a very uncomfortable position; for he apparently knows enough about the subject to be aware that nothing *less* than telepathy will explain. If he will only investigate for himself, patiently and with as little prejudice as possible, he will yet attain salvation, as other Rationalists have done before him.

also to the degree in which he has studied them, as Sir Oliver Lodge, though a physicist, has a right to an opinion on psychical questions because he has given a great deal of thought to them for more than thirty years. And this is what Sir Oliver said, in a famous utterance:

> The evidence—nothing new or sensational, but cumulative and demanding prolonged serious study—to my mind goes to prove that discarnate intelligence, under certain conditions, may interact with us on the material side, thus indirectly coming within our scientific ken; and that gradually we may hope to attain some understanding of the nature of a larger, perhaps etherial, existence, and of the conditions regulating intercourse across the chasm.[1]

It is to be noted that the question is treated as a scientific one, to be settled according to the evidence. Belief or unbelief is to be decided by the facts.

But Sir E. Ray Lankester came along and said that he thought Sir Oliver Lodge's statement "singularly out of place at a meeting for the advancement of science."[2] He did not say why. He did not proceed to prove that the subject was not amenable to scientific method; and, if it is, it is eminently suitable for discussion by the British Association for the Advancement of Science. Then why did the famous biologist show hostility? To some readers it seemed clear that the secret was emotional bias. Sir Ray Lankester does not like psychical research, and, of course, he has a perfect right to dislike it, and to attack it, as indeed he does very vigorously. In *Bedrock*, in 1912, there was a massed attack on it by Sir Ray Lankester, Sir Bryan Donkin, and Dr. Ivor Tuckett. Sir Oliver Lodge replied, and the present writer skirmished round in another

[1] "Continuity," pp. 90-1. British Association Address, 1913.

[2] *Daily Telegraph*, September 30, 1913.

article. What was chiefly apparent was that, whichever side was right, our side had done the most investigating. The others had read books, but they did not seem to have experimented much. If they had they did not say so.

It is interesting to note that we have persuaded one arm-chair critic to investigate, with the usual result. Dr. Charles Mercier, inexperienced and even unacquainted with the literature of the subject until 1916, wrote his book "Spiritualism and Sir Oliver Lodge," finishing us off in fine style, after the manner of Mr. Clodd, but more so. A controversy followed in the *Medical Press*, and in reply to a letter of mine Dr. Mercier wrote in the issue of September 26th, 1917: "With regard to his jeers at my inexperience of spiritualism, it may perhaps interest your readers to know that this reproach can no longer be brought against me. I have lately had a great deal of experience of spiritualistic manifestations, and what I have seen has compelled me to modify my views very materially. Some of my experiences far exceed those of Sir Oliver Lodge." Perhaps so; but Dr. Mercier seems apt to go to extremes, and he may be as unsafe a guide in one direction as he was in the other.

What I wish to emphasise is that, whether we are right or wrong in our conclusions—I venture to speak for all psychical investigators—psychical research is absolutely and essentially scientific. It observes, records, tabulates, and infers. It tries to get at the true facts, and then builds its hypotheses thereon, instead of deciding beforehand, as some critics do, swayed by prejudice, that this or that cannot happen, and refusing to "waste time" —as one of them said—over examination of what they have already decided against. This latter course is magnificent, but it is not science. It is mysticism, reliance on

the "Inner Light." Psychical research will have none of that. It wants objective facts. Its method is precisely that of its materialistic opponents, but they do not push inquiry far enough.

Sir Ray Lankester demands "experimental" verification, and the demand is legitimate when fulfilment is possible. But there are many things, in other sciences as well as in psychical research, which cannot be produced to order; e.g., volcanic eruptions, earthquakes, the fall of meteorites, thunderstorms, even rain and the ordinary variations of temperature and the like.[1] We can only observe these phenomena as they occur; but we can nevertheless observe them scientifically when they do occur. So with psychical phenomena. We observe, record, classify, and infer. In all these processes we are liable to human error, as in all other investigations. But we are as careful as possible, and if we make mistakes we are glad to have them pointed out. Hitherto our results have met with no victorious criticism. They stand unshaken, and we are justified in concluding, provisionally at least, that we have achieved some measure of true scientific advance.

[1] The Shah of Persia, visiting Greenwich Observatory, is said to have ordered an eclipse. The Astronomer Royal was unable to oblige, and the Shah suggested his decapitation.

CHAPTER IV

ROMAN CATHOLIC AND MYSTICAL OBJECTIONS

THE materialists, as we have seen—also some philosophers—deny that the phenomena happen as described. They prejudge the question. Because no such phenomena have forced themselves on their attention, they disbelieve, and we understand and can partly excuse their disbelief; but they go wrong when they deny the experiences of others, concerning which they ought to keep an open mind. As Sir Walter Scott neatly says in his introduction to "The Fair Maid of Perth," there is a vulgar incredulity as well as a vulgar credulity, and many a sceptic finds it "easier to doubt than to examine"; easier still, apparently, to deny.

The Roman Catholic, on the other hand, agrees that the things happen, but says that they are the work, not of human spirits, but of devils. Lord Alfred Douglas says in a letter to the *Sunday Times* of September 16th, 1917:

> As a Catholic I am forbidden to take part in a spiritual séance under pain of mortal sin, nor have I the least temptation to do so. But before I became a Catholic I occasionally dabbled in Spiritualism, and my own experiences were quite enough to convince me that the phenomena are sometimes perfectly genuine, and perfectly unaccountable except on a supernatural basis.
>
> The Catholic Church allows that it is perfectly possible to obtain supernatural results at spiritualistic séances. It does not deny the phenomena. But it utterly denies that the "spirits" which give communications are the souls of departed

mortals. The phenomena of Spiritualism are, the Church teaches, produced by devils and evil spirits. Their object is to deceive and betray the human race. Continual indulgence in Spiritualism leads to madness, folly, and despair, and the loss of real faith. . . . The Catholic Truth Society publishes various penny pamphlets, any one of which is quite enough to settle the question for "men of good will," because it is based on the wisdom of the ages to which we are all the heirs if we care to take up our inheritance.

Except for the rather sweeping implication that no man of goodwill can remain unconverted by one of the penny pamphlets mentioned, this is a temperate and reasonable statement. The Church has a long history behind it and is the repository of much gathered and conserved wisdom. For many people its prohibition of spiritualistic practices is undoubtedly wise. In past times it may have been wise for all.

But here a question arises. Is a prohibition to hold good for ever, in spite of changed conditions? In pre-scientific days, when there was no body of organised knowledge and no conception of modern method, it is probable that any giving of the rein to psychical investigation of an inevitably crude sort would have retarded the arrival of science, putting human thought on a wrong tack—wrong for those times. But things are very different now. May it not be that what was wrong then may be right now; not for everyone but for increasing numbers? Children are rightly forbidden to use matches or experiment with nitric acid; but adults use both with advantage.

And we must remember that though there is such a thing as a wise conservatism, this doctrine of reliance on the wisdom of the past, if too unqualifiedly accepted, would result in universal stagnation. It could have been urged, and no doubt was urged, against Christianity when

Christianity was a new thing, both by orthodox Jews and by educated pagans of the Julian type. "Let us abide," they might say, "by the Law and the Prophets, by the wisdom of Abraham our father, by the oracles and gods of centuries of Pythian and other worship." The case of the Jew against Christianity would seem as strong as the case of Rome against Protestantism or against Spiritualism. But in each case the conservative has been wrong; wrong, that is, in thinking he possessed absolute truth and in trying to stamp out the innovation; right, more or less, in acting as a brake to extravagance, in criticising and cautioning. Progress is achieved by action and reaction. Motion is balanced by attraction, and the right orbit is maintained: we need not blame Roman orthodoxy or any other orthodoxy for making its protest, but neither must we allow more than a protest; we must tolerate no Prussian suppression by force of those who think they see a better truth or a further revelation of any kind.

The history of science shows how almost every advance in knowledge has seemed to encroach—and often has encroached—on the province of the priest. But we now see that each discovery widened our conception of the Universe and therefore enlarged our idea of its Creator. The heavens declare the glory of God much more emphatically than they did when men held the little Ptolemaic theory. We now see that we may *trust* the advance of knowledge: that it is *right* to seek it. "Whatever science *can* establish, that it has a right to establish: more than a right, it has a duty. . . If there be things which we are not intended to know, be assured that we shall never know them. . . If we refrain from examination and inquiry, for no better reason than the fanciful notion that perhaps we may be trespassing on forbidden ground, such hesita-

tion argues a pitiful lack of faith in the goodwill and friendliness and power of the forces that make for righteousness."[1]

And, as to the devil-theory, it certainly cannot be proved. Historically—in Christianity—it began by the Church classing the heathen gods as devils. These gods, as we have already seen (pp. 14, 15), may in many instances have been human spirits, which were called *daimones* or *elohim* by some writers. And, the teaching and example of Christ being more potent for good than anything these "gods" could say or do, they *were* devils, comparatively speaking, whatever they were; and the Church was right in combating them. But, we repeat, is the situation the same now? These phenomena, whatever their cause, are leading people out of materialism to a position where religion becomes possible once more. As Myers said, they are proving the preamble of all religions—the existence of a spiritual world. Does it not seem that this step is in a good direction, and therefore hardly to be attributed to evil agency? Moreover, the Roman Church encourages the practice of praying to the Saints. Spiritualists are engaged in precisely this practice, when they ask for helpful messages or signals from friends on the other side. The difference is that these friends have not been officially canonised at Rome. But who at this date will affirm that the Roman Church has a monopoly of sainthood?

As to the spirits' teaching, it seems to be always or practically always in line with high moral standards. In the matter of belief it is always theistic, always reverent; but not much concerned with intellectual niceties such as occupied the minds of Bishops in Church Councils.

[1] Sir Oliver Lodge's "Man and the Universe," p. 209 (5th edition).

It does not debate whether the Third Person of the Trinity proceeds from both the First and the Second or from the First alone—a question which in its day split the Church in two. It is more practical; more like the teaching of Jesus Himself. Regarding spiritualistic utterances, the various controversialists "have admitted moral elevation, but—from their various opposing points of view—have agreed in deploring theological laxity."[1] Perhaps their right course would be to press forward in the direction which they are agreed is good, and to leave those diverging branch-lines which may be individual illusions. It can hardly be supposed that moral teaching which commands the assent of all sorts of believers can be diabolic.

Indeed the fulminations of some of the leading Catholics, like the diatribes of extremists of other clans, are self-condemned by their own violence. Says Father Bernard Vaughan: "To my thinking, one reason above others for not entering into it and practising it, for not attempting to stretch the thin veil dividing this side from that, is the fact that a scientific man like Sir Oliver Lodge should be bamboozled by spirits travestying and personifying the human soul gone under. Do you know, my brethren, I have just as much right for saying that the trance communicators and controllers and spirits that come and rap out nonsense and tap balderdash and show themselves in vision—I have quite as much right and reason for saying they are Satanic spirits as he for calling them human souls."[2]

It naturally occurs to one that the "right" so to pronounce can hardly be based on firsthand knowledge,

[1] Myers's "Human Personality," vol. ii., p. 133.
[2] *The Universe*, June 8, 1917.

since investigation is condemned as mortal sin, and the good Catholic must necessarily obtain his information at secondhand or still more remotely; and, further, the Index of Prohibited Books no doubt bans spiritualistic literature pretty thoroughly.[1]

The fact is, such critics are still fighting against the advance of knowledge by the objective method, as they have fought against it from the beginning. In the physical sciences they have been routed and expelled, but in their desperate zeal for the authority of the Church they hold out against the pioneers in other regions. What they lack is faith—faith in God, who has given us implements wherewith to explore and learn about the universe in which He has placed us. To refuse is to flout Him. Ecclesiasticism is idol-worship.

Then there is the objection of the mystic, who urges that the proper aim of the human spirit is the attainment of union with God, in a state which transcends Time and most of the other conditions of our present life, and is therefore hardly expressible or comprehensible to us now. Consequently the mystic has little interest in Spiritualism and psychical research, except as regards their usefulness in disproving materialism and thus opening the way to a rational religion. He looks on the kind of after-death life described by Spiritualists as an intermediate state, an astral plane, perhaps somewhat of an improvement on the present one, but not at all a place to linger in. Indeed,

[1] There is, however, a book, "The Dangers of Spiritualism" (Sands and Co.: London, 1901), by a man who investigated for himself, and apparently found that in some cases the development of mediumship caused moral deterioration. The anonymous author—whose identity is now well known—became a Catholic, and naturally accepted the Church's views. His experiences must have been unusual. I have never come across anything of the kind.

he often objects to any psychical investigation, because it is a misdirection of energy, a using up of force over external trivialities when we might be pressing upwards to the Divine by the inner way.

There is some truth in all this, and to many good people it appeals with fully constraining power. Accordingly they follow their consciences in the matter, and are right in so doing. To others, however, who rest equally on the same fundamental basis of intuition, it seems that this very thoroughgoing mysticism is a little one-sided. While believing, as indeed all Spiritualists believe, that the next stage is not our abiding home and that we shall progress to states incomprehensible to us now, it nevertheless seems to us that each of these stages will have its lessons to teach, and that the right thing is to take them as they come. The mystic hopes for a sort of short cut to ineffable bliss; but his expectation seems premature. He will probably have much to learn before he gets there. Our ideas of values are much changed since the days when the stifler of Reason thought that he did God service. We now regard Reason as a divine gift, equally with other powers; to be exercised in learning about this very wonderful universe in which its Fashioner, our Father, has placed us. The intellectual virtues, as Myers said, are now necessary to salvation. Knowledge is good, as well as Love. Indeed, love to our fellows can best be manifested through knowledge; improvement in the conditions of life—not material conditions only—has come about through applied science. And what a widening of the mind, what an enlargement of our conception of the universe, has been achieved, say, since Newton! Think of the means of locomotion and communication! Until the beginning of the nineteenth

century we could travel no faster than Julius Cæsar did, and messages had to be carried. Now we fly, and the ether carries our messages at speeds which render the most distant points on the earth's surface only, so to speak, next door. It is not merely the utility of the thing that appeals; it is the widening of our conceptions from provincialism to cosmopolitanism. A Race consciousness is awaking. The individualism of the solitary savage, improving to a tribal and then national conscience, is merging into the higher perception that we are members of one family; the Brotherhood of Man appears. To this end applied science has been the chief contributor. We cannot think of distant people until we know of their existence; we cannot feel any brotherliness towards them until we know something about them. How much did we know of China a few hundred years ago? But now we learn from to-day's paper what happened in Peking yesterday.

The modern temper, then, will probably not accede to any suppression of the intellectual virtues; and though too much time may be given by this or that individual to psychical research—in the opinion of others—it is for himself to decide, and our faith is that the research is good. Anything can be overdone. Darwin regretted his too great absorption in science, which robbed him of power to appreciate poetry and music; but the fact of his too great absorption does not condemn biology. And psychical research is as scientific as biology, and as justifiable. "The least justifiable attitude," says Sir Oliver Lodge, "is that which holds that there are certain departments of truth in the universe which it is not lawful to investigate." We must guard against excess, which is possible in any direction; but we must also guard against any attempt to bar the way to knowledge, or any attempt to dictate its

methods. The mystic finds knowledge by the inner way; well and good; but he must not try to force his way upon us. We also have our inner light, and for us it is right to try the outer way. Both are legitimate and each should tolerate the other. The hill of Zion is one, but there are different methods of approach.

CHAPTER V

SOME PROTESTANT OBJECTIONS

In current Protestant criticisms of Spiritualism we find a great deal of regrettable ignorance. For example, in a weekly paper called *The Christian*, for March 1st, 1917, there was a leading article on "The Snare of Spiritualism," which contains the following remarkable piece of rhetoric:

> Granting, for the sake of argument, that some of the alleged Spiritualistic phenomena are genuine, would we really wish to subject our holy dead to the will and whim of a medium, and the clumsy and undignified expedient of "table-turning"? Would we not rather agree with Joseph Conrad that it is intolerable to suppose that the august dead are at the mercy of the incantations of Eusapia Palladino or Mrs. Piper?

We would indeed; and we do not suppose anything of the kind; nor does any Spiritualist known to me.[1]

Spiritualists make no claim to be able to "call up" any particular spirit. They seek to give good conditions, the chief of which is a quiet passivity and harmony, and leave the initiative to those on the other side. However greatly we may differ from the Spiritualists, no antagonist who has investigated or even read in the most elementary way can make such absurd statements about the dead being liable to "the will and whim of a medium" or "at the mercy of the incantations of Eusapia Palladino or

[1] The Bishop of Chelmsford similarly is reported to have said that, "it is beneath the dignity of the future life to think that the souls of men and women who are gone to be with Christ should be at the beck of anyone who wishes to call them up" (*Church Times*, March 1, 1918).

Mrs. Piper." Spiritualists know well enough, and say so continually, that they have to take what comes. Results cannot be commanded. Such "criticism" as the foregoing almost makes one despair. Instructed criticism is aways welcome, and there are many points at which Spiritualism is open to attack; but this necromantic charge is sheer, unqualified, abysmal ignorance, and it is astonishing and depressing to find people in responsible positions exerting their influence to the utmost of their power in a definite direction, on a subject which they obviously know nothing about.

Here may be mentioned and illustrated the eager and reckless way in which some of these critics seize on anything that supports their prejudices, without stopping to test the truth of their weapons.

"New York is said to have one asylum devoted solely to people who lose their reason through trafficking in Spiritualism, and our own asylums are said to receive many victims,"[1] It seems that these things "are said," but there is a notable absence of information as to who says them; and though they may be true, it is clear that ordinary fair play requires that some evidence should be given when such a serious charge is made. It is quite likely that there are insane Spiritualists, as there are insane people of all colours and sizes and sects; but it has never yet been proved or even rendered probable that insanity occurs *in a higher proportion* among Spiritualists than among other people. My own impression is that the kind of orthodoxy represented by *Joyful News* has been responsible for more insanity than Spiritualism has. It is comprehensible enough that people should go

[1] *Joyful News*, October 4, 1917, a Wesleyan paper. Article by the Editor.

mad when told repeatedly and emphatically that they will suffer everlasting torture if they do not "believe" as they are ordered to. I know of several such cases; religious melancholia and mania are common; but I have not yet known a spiritualist who has become insane, and my experience is confirmed by that of several magistrates who sign certificates of lunacy. Testimony from one of them will be found in *The Two Worlds* for August 24th, 1917. Mr. Jones offered £100 to any charity if Dr. Robertson could substantiate his statements about Spiritualism causing insanity. The challenge was not accepted.[1]

I am informed by Mr. Ernest W. Oaten, President of the Spiritualists' National Union, that during his twenty-five years' close association with Spiritualism he has known of three spiritualists, and three only, who have been taken to lunatic asylums. In each case other members of the family, not spiritualists, had previously become insane; in other words, there was a congenital taint, and to this the insanity must be attributed rather than to Spiritualism. Moreover, in one of the three cases the man had had so much trouble by bereavement and in other ways—which Mr. Oaten, having known him well, described to me in detail—that great depression would have been inevitable in anyone passing through such an accumulation of disaster and tragedy. But the man was confined as a precautionary measure only, and he was out in fourteen weeks. He has been all right ever since, and has built up a prosperous business.

And if it is claimed that though spiritualists themselves

[1] Just after writing the foregoing, I received a pathetic and well-expressed letter from an asylum patient who, it appeared, had just seen a statement of Sir A. Conan Doyle's that there is no everlasting hell. He asked if he might rely on this. Orthodoxy had driven the man mad on this point, and had ruined a useful life.

do not go mad but that the (apparently weaker-minded) non-spiritualists do when they touch the subject, the answer is that insanity has *decreased* during the last two years, for the first time since 1859; and these two years have admittedly seen a great increase in spiritualistic interest among the general public. According to the *Evening News* (London) of November 5th, 1917, quoting the report of the Board of Control, there were 134,029 lunatics under control in England and Wales at the beginning of the year. "This shows a decrease of 3,159 on the figures of the previous year, although in 1915 there was a decline of 3,278 cases. These are the only occasions since 1859 when the lunacy returns have failed to show a rise."

This is a sufficient answer to those who assert, without proof, that Spiritualism is filling the asylums. It would almost seem to indicate that, on the contrary, the consolations of spiritualistic belief are saving from insanity many who otherwise would have lost their reason through grief. Several people have indeed told me that in their case it has been so; the new knowledge has saved them from mental disaster.

It is on record that W. T. Stead was a vigorous opponent of the stage so long as he had never entered a theatre, but that he changed his mind when he obtained experience. The warnings against Spiritualism remind us of him. "If a Spiritualistic church is opened, do not go to its meetings, even if you are pressed to do so by others, and do your best to keep others out. God only knows what will happen to you if you enter. Keep outside! I warn you to keep away from the Spiritualistic mediums, for they may have a power over you, and then wreck your health and ruin your joy for the rest of your

life, while they lead you to everlasting destruction"—and much more to the same effect.[1]

Comment on such unsupported ravings is unnecessary.

There is a certain amount of difficulty felt by some minds on account of the "triviality" of alleged communications. Prebendary A. Caldecott, Professor of Moral and Mental Philosophy at King's College, London, is reported as having said that in Sir Oliver Lodge's book "Raymond" he had found only two or three pieces of evidence "which seemed to have any solemnity about them at all, and they were concerned with the most trivial things. On a subject of this kind all trivialities were painful, but it was a striking fact that trivialities were all that the evidence could produce."[2]

The facts are (1) that "solemnity" is no proof of anything, and its presence or absence has nothing to do with the evidential problem; (2) that trivial personal details are probably the best evidence of personal identity, far more convincing than any amount of the "solemn" religious talk which Prebendary Caldecott seems to think desirable; (3) that they are not "painful" but are, on the other hand, extremely consoling, as when a soldier boy sends his love to correctly named sisters and brothers who are unknown to the medium; and (4) that the statement about trivialities being all that the evidence produces is incorrect. The literature of spiritualism abounds with

[1] Mr. Parker, quoted by the Editor, apparently with approval, in *Joyful News*, October 4th, 1917. Somewhat similarly, even the Master of the Temple (Dr. E. W. Barnes) says that spiritualistic practices are "often gravely harmful," but gives no evidence, as his legal hearers would note (Sermon, February 4th, 1917. *Christian Commonwealth* supplement, No. 327, March 14th, 1917).

[2] *Church Family Newspaper*, November 2nd, 1917. Conference on "Life after Death," at Caxton Hall, organised by the Christian Evidence Society.

religious communications—A. J. Davis wrote nearly thirty volumes of that kind of thing, and there are hundreds of others—and many of them are impressive to those who seek emotional qualities such as "solemnity." But they are not *evidential*. Science requires facts, and tries to consider them without the intrusion of disturbing emotion.

In short, there is a tendency on the part of some well-meaning but prejudiced people to ignore real evidence because it is not sensational. Clerics are perhaps specially liable to this, because they are largely concerned with influencing people through their emotions. A preacher is not continually engaged in the search for truth, as the man of science is; and he needs to be on his guard against the temptation to rhetoric which doth so easily beset him. Eloquence is well when it is well employed, on the side of truth; but it is commensurately evil when employed on the side of untruth. It is not a monopoly of the good; the Devil is a persuasive speaker, according to Milton and other authorities. Evil is wrought by want of thought (and knowledge) as well as want of heart. We must learn that it is definitely wrong to express strong opinions and to pose as teachers in matters which we have not adequately studied.

But when our clerical friends move on to things more within their own domain they become at least interesting and their points worthy of consideration. For instance, the Editor of *Joyful News* (issue just quoted, October 4th, 1917), while admitting that many curious things happen and that some people have second sight and what not, is nevertheless hostile to Spiritualism, and quotes Biblical passages against it, such as Deuteronomy xviii. 9, Leviticus xix. 31, xx. 6, 27, Exodus xxii. 18, 1 Chronicles x. 13, 14. A Wesleyan minister did the same thing recently,

and imagined he had thereby disposed of Sir A. Conan Doyle. And of course it is legitimate enough to quote the Bible, and any quotation from it must have our serious consideration. But, in all fairness, and without any desire to score points, we may ask, calmly and quietly, with the sole desire to get at the truth, will these orthodox friends still maintain, after reflection, that their Biblical prohibitions apply to-day? For instance, Leviticus xix. certainly says: "Turn ye not unto them that have familiar spirits": but it also says: "When ye reap the harvest of your land, thou shalt not wholly reap the corners of thy field, neither shalt thou gather the gleaning of thy harvest . . . thou shalt not sow thy field with two kinds of seed; neither shall there come upon thee a garment of two kinds of stuff mingled together . . . ye shall not round the corners of your heads, neither shalt thou mar the corners of thy beard," and so on, including instructions for offering a ram as a sacrifice in a certain kind of sin. Does anyone seriously assert that these prohibitions and laws are binding on us to-day? Does any cleric, however scrupulous, insist on his clothing being all wool or all cotton, or all silk? Does he exhort farmers, in times of dearth—or in any other times—to leave the corners of their fields unreaped? If not, if these parts of Leviticus xix. are no longer regarded as binding, how can it be maintained that verse 31 is binding? It is all or none; you cannot select without giving away your case. You may say your conscience or intuition assures you that verse 31 remains wise and valid while the other prohibitions are obsolete, but in doing so you are throwing overboard the authority of the Scriptures and falling back on your own judgment. This you have a perfect right to do; but you can no longer shelter behind an impregnable Leviticus;

you are out in the open, fighting on equal terms, not in a concrete blockhouse. You are driven to admit that it is a matter for the individual conscience, as indeed it is; which is a very different conclusion from the confident prohibition with which you started out. Other people have consciences and judgment as well as the Editor of *Joyful News*.

One occasionally sees the parable about the rich man and Lazarus (Luke xvi.) cited as a Biblical anti-Spiritualistic pronouncement. This seems to arise from a mistaken recollection that a "great gulf" is said to be fixed between the dead and the living, and that communication is impossible. But it is plain enough in the parable that the great gulf is between "Hades" and "Abraham's bosom," thus preventing any sending of Lazarus to the rich man to cool his tongue. This being impossible, Dives asks that Lazarus may be sent to earth, to warn Dives' living brothers of the after-death retribution for evil. Abraham does not say that *this* is impossible; he says nothing of any gulf in that direction, between the dead and the living. All he says is that it would not be any use, Dives' brothers evidently being settled in their ways, or perhaps because they held the opinions of Father Bernard Vaughan and would have regarded the apparition of a well-meaning Lazarus as a diabolic personation, to be exorcised or fled from.

Further, the story is a parable, no doubt intended mainly to teach kindness to the suffering, and the fact of disciplinary after-death punishment for selfishness and callousness. We are not bound to take its details of "torment," "flame," etc., as literal facts, any more than we are bound to believe that Jesus knew a man who fell among thieves between Jerusalem and Jericho; or one who gave

a dinner and sent out into the highways and hedges for guests; or a man with a dishonest steward; or a vineyard-owner whose son was murdered by the employees when he went for some grapes. The stories were told for the lessons they conveyed. But, even considered as a narration of actual fact occurring in the spirit world, the Dives and Lazarus parable is no argument against communication from the dead. The great gulf is between good and bad *spirits,* not between the dead and the living. Nay, the parable is a confirmation rather than the opposite, for, Abraham having replied that it was impossible for Lazarus to cross to the spirit in pain, he would presumably have said the same, if it had been so, about Lazarus going to the five brothers on earth. His reply that it would be useless is a tacit affirmation that it was possible.

But, proceeding another step, there is another position held by orthodox Protestants, which is a strong one and worthy of careful consideration. Certainly there is some truth in it, though it need not shut us off from psychical studies, nor, indeed, can it be definitely proved. But it ought to be weighed by all of us. It is well presented in a sermon by the Bishop of Oxford, reported in the *Church Times* of March 23rd, 1917.

Dr. Gore argues eloquently that it is healthier to believe in a future life because of our faith in God, than to rest such belief on piecemeal phenomena. The Jews were repeatedly warned against this latter way (here Dr. Gore quotes the inevitable Leviticus xix. 31), being "debarred from dealings with the dead and, for long years, from any revelation of life beyond the grave, in order that that belief when it came to them might grow out of their assured faith in God and not from any real or imaginary communications from the dead."

And we may admit, as already said, that for many people this is still a wise counsel. Those who can, on any ground or none, believe that the Universe is friendly, that God is in His heaven and also in His world, which therefore must ultimately be all right—these people need not worry themselves with piecemeal proofs of survival, and their energies are therefore free for more secularly useful things. On the other hand, many good people are without this God-consciousness, and faith in the friendliness of the Universe is impossible for them without some objective evidence of personal survival. These people may be of a lower order of soul than those who are strong in faith. They may, or may not; it hardly seems to be a point on which any of us can dogmatise. But they are, nevertheless, good souls, and if they are not allowed to get back to a religious position by this particular way, they do not seem likely to get back at all; and it seems a cruel and unwise and indeed presumptuous thing to shut a door in their faces. There are many ways home to our Father, and we should beware how we ban a suffering fellow soul from return by the path which is to him the only one possible.

And, indeed, if he is correctly reported, it is not clear that Dr. Gore is quite consistent with himself; for, although gleams of immortality-belief certainly begin to show towards the end of Old Testament times, he admits that it was Christ's resurrection that gave the proof and the power to the new dispensation. "Not only the teaching, but even more, the actual resurrection of our Lord from the dead, raised it to a level of absolute certainty for the believer in Him." And the Bishop does not blame the Early Christians for being strengthened in their faith by, or basing their belief on—as indubitably in many cases it

would be entirely based on—this objective resurrection. If then it was right for them to believe on the basis of things perceived by their senses—the material and phantasmal appearances of Jesus after His death,—it is difficult to see how it is wrong for people nowadays to base their belief on similarly objective evidence. Christ may have loved John the most, but He did not condemn Thomas, who believed on evidence shown.

If it is urged that that great Resurrection was a unique event—but all events are unique, for no two are identical —and that it sufficed for all time, there is, perhaps, no answer, as, indeed, there is no proof either way. But there are few now who would assert this. Most are agreed that God is not dead, that Revelation is still proceeding, that science and art and literature, and all interactions of Nature and man, are teaching us continually more and more of the Divine mind. Consequently this static conception of religion is no longer tenable. There was an advance nineteen hundred years ago; there have been many advances since—not, indeed, in the root-principles of love to God and man, which cannot be transcended, but in methods of applying that love and in showing our love of God by seeking more knowledge of His ways and His handiwork; and it is obscurantism, a sinning against the light, if we try to hold back the grand development of His self-revelation. Dr. Gore has well said, elsewhere, that "the Church in each age should be free to return upon its central creed, structure and worship, and without loss of continuity re-express its theological mind, as it has so often already done, in view of the fresh developments of the intellectual, moral and social life of man."[1]

In sum, then, we may perhaps say that though psy-

[1] "Dissertations," p. 213.

chical phenomena have been and may continue to be for many the only way back to religious faith—by proving the preamble of all religions, the existence of a spiritual world—it is nevertheless desirable to keep the phenomenal side in its proper place. It proves the preamble, supplies a base; but it is not itself religion. That is an inner thing, and concerns the state and attitude of the soul. Spiritualists would do well to ponder the utterances of such scholarly and tolerant critics as Dr. Gore. There is a possibility that they may learn from him to avert their own extinction as a sect by developing a greater spirit of worship in their services. Certain it is that if Spiritualism as a religion is to continue and extend, it must provide, as with many it does provide, for wider needs than those concerning only evidence of survival. Perhaps the solution may come by the churches accepting the essentials of Spiritualistic truth, which they had lost sight of and were no longer preaching. The existence of a separate sect to emphasise survival and communication may then become unnecessary.

CHAPTER VI

FECHNER'S THEORY OF LIFE AFTER DEATH

MANY poets and philosophers have inclined to the idea of a World-soul thinking in all of us rather than that of a lot of personal and everlasting souls. Perhaps the inclination is the result of a feeling that there is something comic, yet also unpleasant, in the thought of our present little selves enduring to all eternity. We feel that we should get very tired of our own company. We do not want to have John Smith eternally to struggle with, as Mrs. Stetson said. Accordingly we feel friendly to the pan-psychic idea. As Coleridge has it:

> And what if all of animated nature
> Be but organic harps divinely framed,
> That tremble into thought as o'er them sweeps,
> Plastic and vast, one intellectual breeze,
> At once the soul of each, and God of all?[1]

Leibnitz presents the same notion in his "Considérations sur la Doctrine d'un Esprit universel," and Robert Burns echoes Coleridge, in a letter to Mrs. Dunlop, as also does Fiona Macleod in "Amid the Uplands." The best modern philosophic presentation of pan-psychism is that of G. T. Fechner, who moreover provides for individual survival within his scheme. Those who object to this may console themselves with the thought that survival does not involve everlastingness, for it may be the fact—probably is—that spirits gradually drop their limitations

[1] "The Æolian Harp."

and evolve into something of which we can now form no conception; something greater than what we know as personality.

This system is worth some consideration, and we will here glance over its main features.

Fechner's method is the scientific method of analogy. He examines that which is best known to us, and then uses the process-principles which he finds, as hypotheses wherewith to explain the unknown. He has three main arguments, each addressed to a cardinal difficulty of the survival doctrine. These three difficulties may be indicated somewhat thus, as propounded by a supposed antagonist:

1. Inorganic matter has no consciousness associated with it. When we die our bodies become inorganic matter, sooner or later—almost immediately if we are cremated. Therefore, at death, or soon after, consciousness perishes.

2. If there is anything in us that is unaffected by bodily death, how can it survive individually when it no longer has a body to contain it and separate it from others? Will it not rather merge into a general psychic mass?—"the Dewdrop slips into the shining Sea." In particular, how can we conceive of individual *memory* persisting, when we no longer have a brain? Admittedly, personal survival must involve memory-continuity. I shall not be myself unless I carry at least my principal recollections with me. And how can I be supposed to do that when I no longer have the brain in which on a materialistic theory they were stored?

3. There is a great break between this life and the problematical next, and science demands gradation. We must be able to see continuity, smooth transition, before we can believe in survival. The future life must be seen

as a *further stage of evolution,* not as a metaphysical affair islanded off from our present state.

Fechner deals with these difficulties as follows:

1. The major premise of this syllogism is false. Inorganic matter is *not* unconscious and dead. Living creatures have arisen out of the earth. Has, then, the dead given birth to the living? Surely not. Is it not more reasonable to suppose that the earth is not a dead lump but is somehow alive—for science teaches that all matter is intensely active on the molecular and electronic scale—although her life is manifested in ways different from those of our own bodies? If my body is the material sustainer or concomitant or expression of my spirit, is it not reasonable to suppose that the whole earth is the material sustainer or concomitant or expression of an Earth-Spirit? May not all planets and suns be similarly ensouled—Uriel, the sun-angel, no longer a myth but a reality; and all their spirits parts and ministers of the God in whom they live and move and have their being—the whole material universe being His body, and the various subordinate beings serving the same purpose in Him as the different human faculties serve in the one human mind? He is thus immanent in nature. Fechner might have quoted Virgil's most central, most Virgilian, passage (as Myers calls it) in support:

> One Life through all the immense creation runs,
> One Spirit is the moon's, the sea's, the sun's;
> All forms in the air that fly, on the earth that creep,
> And the unknown nameless monsters of the deep,—
> Each breathing thing obeys one Mind's control,
> And in all substance is a single Soul.[1]

[1] "Æneid," vi. (F. W. H. Myers's "Classical Essays," p. 173). Sir Oliver Lodge says, similarly: "The soul in this sense is related to the organism in somewhat the same way as the 'Logos' is related to the Universe" ("Man and the Universe," p. 166, 5th Edition). The idea is,

The universe is, then, matter saturated with mind. The earth, a portion of that universe, is body and spirit, as we ourselves are, still smaller portions of that portion. When we die our bodies rejoin the earth's mass, from which indeed they were not severed except as being points at which material activity of a peculiar kind was manifested; and our spirits rejoin the earth's spirit-mass, from which they were not severed except as being points at which psychical activity of our particular human kind was manifested. The old materialists thought that when the body died the psychical activity formerly associated with it became extinct. But this is not scientific. To suppose annihilation of anything is to fly in the face of science, which sees in Nature change but not annihilation. The material of our bodies does not go out of existence at death. It only changes its form and the manner of its activity. So with our spirits. They are not annihilated. They survive, but they change the manner of their activity. They rejoin the Earth-Spirit, which is itself a part of the immortal Universe-Spirit; thus rejoining, how can they die?

2. But how, exactly, do they rejoin it? Merged, like water in a flask which is broken in the sea? No, says Fechner. No cessation of individuality is involved. We continue to exist as conscious selves. Here we pass to the next line of argument, for this continuation of individuality requires support. The body-analogy fails, for the body is quickly absorbed into other organisms or is converted into

of course, ancient: "According to the Vedanta view of Brahma being the cause of the world, the relation between the world and Brahma is analogous to that between a body and its soul. Thus Brahma is the soul of which the whole world is the body." (*Hibbert Journal*, April, 1912; Article, "Brahma," by Professor S. A. Desai, Holkar College, Indore, Central India.)

a few gases and a handful of calcareous ashes: its materials are not annihilated, but they are so much diffused that we see no likeness to the old body. We might thus be led to suppose that the spirit, if there is such a thing, will similarly disintegrate: that its elements of sensation, perception, recollection, and the like, will diffuse, and its recognisable personality vanish. But Fechner will not accept this. He argues for personal continuance, invoking other analogies.

The first part of our mental life is sensation and perception. These experiences are then transferred into the domain of memory, where they are variously compounded and inter-related, though without in the least losing their individual character. A visual perception remains a visual memory, as individual as it was in perception. Fechner likens earth life to the domain of perception and the after-life to that of memory. When I die the Earth-Spirit ceases to perceive through me, but my whole mind enters into that Spirit's memory-life, acquiring wider relations and closer communion with other spirits, yet without losing its selfhood. Also it continues to develop, as a recollection develops. I may not have seen Antonine's Column since I was a boy, but it is more to me now than then, because I have read history and the "Meditations." In the same way, a spirit grows after death—becomes more to its containing Earth-Spirit—by its interaction with other spirits and by the perceptions of the still living. And spirits continue to influence the living reciprocally, as our recollections influence all our perceptions. My recollections of trees influence my perception of a tree: I import into the visual sensations which are all that the tree really causes, all sorts of remembered experiences, and I think

of it not only as a flat patch of colour and light and shade, but as a round and rough and rustling thing. I perceive it as a tree, though I do not sense all the attributes of its tree-ness. Similarly, my impressions of an evening prospect may be enriched by the memory of an Ode to the Setting Sun or the similar monologue of Faust: Thompson and Goethe are influencing my perceptions.

Minds, then, are closely connected and interpenetrative If it be asked: "How can conscious personality be maintained if this is so?" Fechner answers with another question: "How can the individuality of perceptions and recollections be maintained when they are propagated over the same nerves and mixed up in one brain?" Yet they do remain distinct. Also, notes retain their individuality in a symphony, though the vibrations blend inextricably. Similarly, our spirits, though it might seem that they must by intermixing be merged into homogeneity at death, may really retain their personality quite unimpaired.

Then as to memory. We have admittedly no physiological theory of memory, and consequently there is no great difficulty in supposing full memory to be carried over by the spirit when it leaves its body. We do not know how we remember things even now; is it not rather over-exigent to demand explanation as to how we shall remember them then? At least, is it not over-fastidious to reject the survival-belief because such explanation is not forthcoming?

This leads inevitably to the larger question of the post-mortem body. The spirit seems to have no material vesture. The ancient query arises: "With what body do they come?" The fleshly garment is transitory—is

as grass, which to-day is and to-morrow is cast into the oven. That body, at least, is done for:

> 'Tis but a Tent where takes his one day's rest,
> A Sultan to the realm of Death addrest;

but if there is a Sultan at all—addrest, as survival-evidence indicates, not to Death but to Life—he must have another Tent somewhere, after his this-day's abode is struck. We do not see it, and are perhaps inclined to fall back on "etherial" bodies. But the ether is continuous, and any dividing of it up into bodies seems difficult. We must turn back and see if we have really exhausted the possibilities of matter.

3. Beginning, as is his habit, with the known, Fechner directs our attention to the fact of our persisting identity. The matter and the form of a human being are in continuous change, and there is no identity in either, between the child and the octogenarian. Yet we say he is the same person. His shape is unrecognisably different, and all the molecules of his body are different; yet he is the "same" person. In what physically speaking, does the continuity of personality inhere? It is in this, that *the later body has grown out of the earlier one*. The body of to-day is the effect of the body and its environment of yesterday.

But the body's activities are not confined to producing the body of the moment ahead. We are continually affecting the external world by our actions and words, perhaps even by unspoken or unacted thought—for thought presumably is accompanied by cerebral changes, and those changes may affect the entire universe, by ether-pulses or what not. Well, the total of our effect on the world, the matter which has been affected by our activities, forms the body of our post-mortem conscious-

ness. A brain and body are like a seed, which puts forth from the small and delicate structure, which is soon abandoned, something far greater and richer. Whatever each one of us has contributed to the construction of the organisation of the world he will have in the after-life as the material basis of his spirit.[1]

This idea seems to indicate a possible way of understanding or half-understanding psychometry. If every piece of matter which we influence, every piece of matter which is different for our having lived, somehow bears part of our spirit upon or within it, we may dimly begin to see how an old glove can reveal things about its owner to a person appropriately endowed. The details of the process evade us, but we can dimly see that the thing begins to look rational and connectable with the body of existing science. Ordinarily information about me is conveyed by atmospheric vibrations initiated by my voice, or etherial ones reflected from my body or from printed pages which embody—as we may say—my thought. Well, every visible object reflects light, besides having other properties; and my old glove is different in appearance for my having used it, and is different from anyone else's glove.

I see no great difficulty, therefore, in conceiving that it may yield information about me, as a letter does. Both have been affected and their form produced by my actions; both furnish visual sensations. I have at least been closely associated with the glove—much more so than with the ink and paper which my reader has before him, which I have never seen, yet which is the vehicle conveying my present thought to his mind. To a savage, the com-

[1] "Tagesansicht," p. 28; "Zend-Avesta," ii., p. 258.

munication of knowledge by black marks on paper is as mysterious as psychometry is to us.

Whatever the reason, it is certain that objects formerly belonging to the supposed spirit are found to facilitate the production of evidential information concerning him, usually purporting to be messages consciously sent.

The matter which Fechner himself affected was largely in the brains of other human beings, but the sequelæ flow outward infinitely and untraceably. My own brain is different from what it would have been if Fechner had not lived. My mind partakes of his spirit. He has largely entered into my thoughts. The brain-changes which have occurred in me as I absorb a part of his spirit are the basis of his spirit in me—the material concomitant of his self-conscious activity in me. If it be objected that "changes" seem an unsatisfactory material foundation for consciousness, the sufficient reply is that change is the one constant thing in the universe: all is in flux: my ordinary consciousness itself is supported or accompanied by continual bodily change. My body is not the same for two consecutive seconds. And if continual change is the material concomitant of my consciousness, so may it be with any other.

Darwin discovers a new law. Immediately the brains of others are modified by the reading of "The Origin of Species," and their minds are influenced concomitantly, Darwin's spirit lives in them. The contemporaries of Darwin die, and he ceases to live in their particular brains, but lives on in those who read his books and who have in any way been influenced by his life and work. Thus Darwin's present body is made up of matter spread widely over the earth. It exists wherever his spirit exists; wherever his thought is still active. And in thus really entering

into the minds of men he is in far closer communion with them, and with a far larger number of them, than is possible in the earth life: for here we can be consciously in touch with only a few other minds at a time, and that through the dimming and distorting medium of sense and language.

If it is said that this widely diffused body seems an absurd idea—that the body does not hang together—the reply is that all matter is connected, and that distance is a relative thing. To a blood corpuscle it may be unthinkable that one consciousness is spread over such a huge area as a human brain. To a molecule of protoplasm it would be more unthinkable still. Molecules are separated from each other by spaces proportionately much greater than those which separate human beings; how can the same consciousness include such widely sundered particles—how can they hang together as parts of one particular whole, when obviously, to molecular consciousness, they do not hang together at all? Yet the fact is that they do; that the same consciousness does include them all. So also may the matter-particles which—to us widely sundered—serve as the body of a "departed" spirit. He has dropped the little body which we knew; but he has only gone out into the wider body which he built by his activity when incarnate.[1] Perhaps we may regard this wider personality, on its psychical side, as the "subliminal" of Myers. During the incarnate life it remains asleep and is outside normal consciousness. In certain abnormal states, such as clairvoyance, the light of consciousness wanders into the wider body temporarily and brings back information normally unknown; but we do not enter into full possession of the wider body until we leave our flesh. This sleep of

[1] "On Life After Death," pp. 90, 91; "Zend-Avesta," ii., p. 254.

the wider self during our present-life incarceration is supported by an ingenious analogy to be noted presently.

It is often asked, concerning the future life: "Shall we know each other, and, if so, how can we now represent to ourselves such recognition when the well-known body is no longer there?" The answer is that the effects of our bodily life will still represent that former body to those in the next world, when suitable occasion arises; somewhat as in memory we are able to recall perceptions without re-experiencing the old sensory stimuli. "The spirits will be able to see each other in their former semblance, without possessing a small, spatial, material eye, when they turn their attention to each other. At present a wall, or distance, prevents me seeing others. Barriers of this kind do not continue to exist in the memory-world; the future-life form can appear instantaneously, here or there, whenever it is conjured up. Still, bounds and barriers will not be altogether done away with: some will exist, as in our memory-life now; for recollections are only called up according to the laws of association, and with the psychological laws of the present those of the hereafter will coincide." [1]

Fechner then goes on to tell two more or less evidential apparition-stories related to him by scientific friends of his own. As to the inferences to be drawn, "apparitions of this kind afford in themselves no means of deciding whether they are projected into the external world from the brain of a living person by some abnormal functioning of the imagination, or whether they impress us from the external world in consequence of causes somehow abnormally functioning in the spiritual realm, or whether perhaps there is a mixture of the two, in some mutually conditioning way." (This is quite in the best modern S.P.R. manner.)

[1] "Tagesansicht," p. 100.

"But if we turn for help to our usual analogical method . . . it at once strikes us that in our own thought-life there are not only things that have really existed, but also imaginary things woven out of different recollections—indeed, the novelist invents whole histories." [1]

Thus, as Fechner would now say, apparitions may be really supernormal and objective, yet not evidential of survival, though they may seem so. They may be the unconscious creations of living (incarnate) minds, which send out impulses which cause hallucinations in others. Thus the apparition of Mr. Walker-Anderson's aunt (pp. 117—18) may have been telepathically caused by some surviving relative in England. But if Fechner had had at his disposal the data which we now possess, it is probable that he would have been driven to admit that the spiritualistic hypothesis seems the more likely to be true. For one thing, we have experimental evidence (e.g. Mr. S. H. Beard's, pp. 118—19) for the "telepathing" of one's own apparition, but no good case of the telepathing of someone else's.

As a further illustration of the more extensive life of the hereafter, Fechner points to the wider memory of the somnambule, somewhat in the same way as Myers. The deeper the sleep, the nearer the approach to after-life knowledge which, however, cannot be altogether brought over or back into the present small consciousness, the latter not being big enough to hold it. Death is only a sleep so deep that the spirit goes out of the body entirely, staying out instead of coming back. When we go out and take possession of this "subliminal" we shall remember all that we have forgotten. We only forgot it because it went to the hereafter-life before us.

[1] "Tagesansicht," p. 102.

Now to the further analogy, already mentioned, with reference to the sleep of the subliminal during incarnation.

Man lives on earth in three stages. In the first (the uterine) he is asleep, in the dark, alone, developing from the germ a body fitted for the second stage. In the second stage (this life) he alternates between waking and sleeping, in light and darkness alternately, associated with, yet separate from, his fellows, developing his mind and fashioning organs for its use in the third stage. In that third stage he is awake for ever, interwoven with the life of other spirits, consciously working in the higher life of the Highest Spirit. Death is a further birth. Each step leads to fuller consciousness. Birth leads us forth to see the world outwardly. Death leads us into the wider vision, to see the world inwardly. As Bergson might say, Stage Two is intellectual, while Stage Three induces us to feel the reality of things from within. "Instead of passing by hills and meadows, instead of seeing around us all the beauties of spring and grieving that we cannot really take them in, as they are merely external, our spirits shall enter into those hills and meadows, to feel and enjoy with them their strength and their pleasure in growing": instead of laboriously expressing ourselves in words we shall dwell in the inmost souls of our friends, thinking and acting in them and through them.[1]

The wider body of the third life is asleep, not self-conscious, until after death, as the body of the second life is asleep and not self-conscious until after birth. What is it, one may ask, that wakes the third-life body to self-consciousness at death? The answer is that it is precisely the fact of death. Conscious energy is like physical

[1] "On Life after Death," pp. 32, 33.

energy—it is conserved, cannot be destroyed and produced afresh. It only changes its place, form, and manner of acting, as the body does. When it sinks in one place it rises in another. "That your eye may be awake, may see consciously, your ear must go to sleep for a while." For mental activity to exist in high degree all the senses must more or less sleep; we cannot think if we are continually having our attention occupied with sights and sounds. Now the most complete sinking of sense-consciousness is that which takes place at death. Therefore there will be a correspondingly high rise of consciousness elsewhere.

Fechner's scheme, as will be seen from what has been said, is strictly scientific. Indeed, it is more scientific than the schemes of many scientists, for some of these latter seem unable or unwilling to extend causality into the mental domain. No one can deny that thought-activity exists. It is more certain than brain-activity. And if all activity has an effect, a sequel or train of sequelæ, there must be something mental as a sequel to this-life mentality, concomitant with the physical effects of the this-life corporeality. The two trains of effects are the spirit and body, respectively, of the after-life.

Whether we can accept the Fechnerian system or not will depend on individual leanings. To many of us it may seem too daring and dazzling either to accept or reject offhand. Perhaps the wisest thing is to study it, without feeling any obligation to decide; the matter being new and the philosophy of survival still to be worked out.

On this philosophic side it is sometimes urged that we cannot reason from the phenomenal to the noumenal, from the world of appearance to the world of reality; that consequently nothing happening in the material world can prove the existence of a spiritual one. But this is easily

answered. We fully agree with Kant that a spiritual world cannot be proved coercively and in such knock-down fashion that belief cannot be avoided. But it can be proved in the same way and to the same extent as many other things which we believe and find ourselves justified in believing. For example, we cannot *prove* to ourselves that other human beings exist, or even that an external world exists; my experience may be a huge subjective hallucination. If I were reading this chapter to an audience I should not be able to prove to myself that any other mind was present. Looking around, I should receive certain impressions—sensations of sight—and I should call certain aggregations of these the physical bodies of beings like myself. From the similarity of their structure and behaviour to the structure and behaviour of my own body, I should infer that they had got minds somehow associated with them, as my mind is associated with my body. But they could not prove it to me. If they got angry with my obstinacy and knocked me down I should experience painful sensations, but the existence of minds external to me—and angry ones—would still be a matter of inference only. It would be a justifiable one, for it "works," and by means of such inferences social life is made possible. And the proof which we psychical researchers put forward for the existence of and communication from discarnate minds, is of the same kind as the proof we have of the existence of incarnate minds. It is an affair of observation and inference in both cases. Usually we prefer to speak of evidence rather than proof, the latter term being loosely used. Proof in the inductive sciences, of which psychical research is one, is not the same thing as mathematical or logical proof. Our evidence may be insufficient to justify belief—in the opinion of many, it is—and I blame no one

for disbelieving; but it is evidence. Says Bishop Berkeley, whom J. S. Mill, himself no idealist, considered the greatest philosophical genius of all time: "The physical universe which I see and feel and infer, is just my dream and nothing else; that which you see is your dream; only it so happens that our dreams agree in many respects." Philosophically, that is the state of the case. For Science and the practical affairs of life, however, we accept experience and inference, and act on their "reality."

CHAPTER VII

SPIRITUALISTIC CONCEPTIONS OF AFTER-DEATH CONDITIONS

As to the nature of the future life, spiritualistic teaching is Swedenborgian in its assertion of similarity to earth-life, but in accordance with the more wholesome and more optimistic idea of universal salvation ultimately, it postulates a continual progression, and no eternal hells. We have already remarked on a certain similarity between Early Christianity and modern Spiritualism, and one of the resemblances may be pointed out here. It is evident that some of the best minds among the early Fathers did not believe in everlasting punishment, while rather encouraging the belief among the general public because nothing short of such severity could restrain the ordinary person's sinful tendencies![1] It is a curious illustration of doing evil that good may come, and retribution for the insincerity became apparent as time went on, and good men left the Church because they could not believe in a God who would punish everlastingly for sins committed in a finite time by beings for whose creation He was entirely responsible. It would have been better to say frankly that punish-

[1] Origen, in "Against Celsus," bk. vi., ch. 25, refers to Gehenna as "the place of punishment, intended for the purification of such souls as are to be purified by torments"; and remarks in ch. 26, "it is not unattended with danger to commit to writing the explanation of such subjects, seeing the multitude need no further instruction than that which relates to the punishment of sinners; while to ascend beyond this is not expedient, for the sake of those who are with difficulty restrained, even by fear of eternal punishment, from plunging into any degree of wickedness."

ment would be remedial and for the soul's good, continuing only until repentance and a turning away from sin become manifest. Love towards God would then still have remained possible; but men could not love or respect a deity more cruel than themselves. They might fear Him, but character is not improved by fear, as we now recognise. Rather is it debased. And, however it may have been in those wild early days—admitting, if we like, that strong measures of creedal restraint were necessary—we are mostly agreed that sensitiveness is great enough now to render the nightmare of a belief in eternal hell unnecessary. Punishment duly apportioned to extent of sin is sufficient, and our sense of justice is satisfied. This means that hell is a fiction, but that purgatory is a fact; and it has been noticeable how theologians and preachers, shocked into living thought by the transition of millions of young men too good for hell and not good enough for a stainless heaven, have revived in one or other form the purgatorial idea—even Nonconformists like the Rev. J. D. Jones, of Bournemouth. And perhaps the spiritualistic and Early-Church idea of a number of "heavens," in one of the lower of which we may place such "hell" as there is, is better than using the word "purgatory," which inevitably recalls the fiendish horrors in Dante, and the abuses of Romanism.

Progress, then, takes place in a series of "spheres," though the division is more or less arbitrary, for if there is smooth gradation it seems inconsistent to say that No. 2 begins here and gives place to No. 3 there. Probably the idea is a survival of traditions about a number of heavens (St. Paul was caught up into the third: 2 Cor. xii.), and about the sacredness of the number seven. Moreover, in early times there were seven "planets"—Moon, Mercury,

Venus, Sun, Mars, Jupiter, Saturn—supposed to be fixed in crystalline spheres at increasing distances from the earth, and these were regarded as connected with departed souls in various states of blessedness, though Dante describes these souls as manifesting in the several heavens (ten in his system) as he passed through, rather than as dwelling therein.

Certainly this idea of a number of heavens is extremely ancient and indeed prehistoric. It runs back through the Kabbala, the Koran, the Talmud, to early Egypt, Persia, Babylonia, and India. In the Ardâi-virâf-nâme there is an account of the seven heavens through which Sosiash travelled in seven days, and the first heaven seems to have been a sort of purgatory for spirits not good enough to go higher. The heavens increase progressively in glory, and in the seventh Zarathustra sits on a golden throne.

The Jews believed in a plurality of heavens, as is shown by the plural form of the Hebrew word for "heaven" in Deuteronomy x. 14; 1 Kings viii. 27; Psalm cxlviii. 4, and it is probable that they followed the sevenfold division, for they seem to have recognised seven "planets," as also did the Persians, who had a representation of them in the Mithraic Mysteries (Origen, "Against Celsus," bk. vi., ch. 22), though they put the order as Saturn, Venus, Jupiter, Mercury, Mars, Moon, Sun. About the time of the birth of Christ the idea was common, as shown by the "Book of the Secrets of Enoch," and the very interesting introduction by Dr. R. H. Charles, to which I am indebted for many of the references in this chapter. This book, lost for 1,200 years, and edited in English for the first time in 1896, was written between 30 B.C. and A.D. 50 by a Hellenised Jew living in Egypt, probably in Alexandria, and is the probable source of some New Testament

passages. There is certainly evidence of the belief in the plurality or even in the sevenfold division of the heavens in the Pauline Epistles—Hebrews, Ephesians—and in the Apocalypses.[1] Clement of Alexandria and Origen were more or less favourably disposed towards it, and the latter identifies the heavens with the planetary spheres of the Greeks.[2] He says also (in "Against Celsus," vi. 22) that in the Mithraic Mysteries the five planets and the sun and moon are represented as connected with a heavenly ladder.

The plurality of the heavens was gradually abandoned as moral ideas grew clearer, "heaven" coming to mean a state of perfection and therefore not applicable to places or states of progression, which involve imperfection. But Catholic theology retained three after-death states, and Protestant theology two, and it does not seem certain that the fewest number is necessarily the truest. It would seem more likely that the stages are, so far as our small minds can go, infinite.

But infinites are never satisfactory, for the word means

[1] Paul's location of Paradise in the third heaven agrees with the "Secrets of Enoch" account.

[2] "I think, therefore, that all the saints who depart from this life will remain in some place situated on the earth, which holy Scripture calls paradise, as in some place of instruction, and, so to speak, class-room or school for souls, in which they are to be instructed regarding all the things which they had seen on earth, and are to receive also some information respecting things that are to follow in the future. . . . If any, indeed, be pure in heart, and holy in mind, and more practised in perception, he will, by making more rapid progress, quickly ascend to a place in the air, and reach the kingdom of heaven, through those mansions, so to speak, in the various places which the Greeks have termed spheres, i.e., globes, but which holy Scripture has called heavens; in each of which he will first see clearly what is done there, and in the second place will discover the reason why things are so done: and thus he will in order pass through all gradations, following Him who hath passed into the heavens, Jesus the Son of God, who said, 'I will that where I am, these may be also.' But really He Himself is everywhere, and passes swiftly through all things." "De Principiis," ii., xi.

only negation—or not-finite—and it is not surprising to find a recrudescence of a seven-heaven belief in modern times, science having established gradation and continuity in nature, which suggests similar gradation and progression in "supernature." How far the idea is dependent on acquaintance with the earlier writers, how far it may be in each case original, and how far there is objective truth in it, it is impossible to say. Certainly the spiritualists prior to 1896 had no knowledge of the "Book of the Secrets of Enoch," which gives the fullest ancient Jewish or Christian account; but they had Dante, and one of A. J. Davis's friends (Rev. George Bush) was Professor of Hebrew and no doubt acquainted with the Talmud and the Vishnu Purana. And a modernised version of those earlier ideas would seem preferable to the heaven and hell belief which was fading. A more gradual system was required to satisfy our moral sense as well as to be more in harmony with scientific analogies.

Since writing the foregoing, I have received a rather curious narrative from a correspondent, which seems to support the gradation theory. The little daughter, aged six, of a man who was killed in the War, "constantly sees and describes her father as near her and giving messages. Amongst others she said: 'Father says there are several heavens, and lots of flowers, ever so many more kinds than here.' As she has never been told these things, and is quite natural and healthy, one can't imagine deception in so young a child. Very often he tells her there is a parcel or letter waiting in the hall—the flat is very high up—and this always turns out to be true." There is certainly reason to believe that children have the gift of "discerning of spirits" more than their elders, and it may be that we have often dismissed as "imagination" the

real perceptions which come before the "shades of the prison-house" of adult materiality begin to close upon the growing soul, as Wordsworth has it in the "Ode on Intimations of Immortality."

A. J. Davis seems to have called the abode of departed spirits "Summerland" in a general sort of way,[1] but Hare says that the third sphere is the plane to which ordinary decent souls ascend at death,[2] and some writers regard this third sphere as being Summerland in particular. Hare and Hudson Tuttle are extremely definite about the spatiality of the spheres. Tuttle says that they are zones rather than spheres, and that they extend sixty degrees on each side of the earth's equator. "If we take the sixteenth parallel of latitude each side of the equator, and imagine it projected against the blue dome of the sky, we have the boundaries of these zones." The first is sixty miles from the earth's surface, the next is about an equal distance farther, the third is "just outside of the moon's orbit,"[3] and so on. The material of these spheres is "formed from emanations arising from the physical universe,"[4] and the spiritual universe is a reflection of the physical one.

Mr. J. Hewat McKenzie develops a similar system, with exact distances given. The first sphere begins at 300 miles from the earth's surface and extends to 750 miles. The second sphere begins at 1,000 miles from the earth, and extends to 1,250 miles. The third sphere or Summer-

[1] "Events in the Life of a Seer," New York, 1873, 5th ed., p. 292.

[2] "Experimental Investigations of the Spirit Manifestation Demonstrating the Existence of Spirits and their Communion with Mortals," pp. 119-124 (quoted at some length in my "Psychical Investigations," pp. 261-7).

[3] "Arcana of Spiritualism," p. 385.

[4] *Op. cit.*, p. 280.

land is 1,350 miles from earth, and so on. The seventh sphere, where Christ dwells, is 18,250 miles away from us,[1] and is a place of gold and jasper and crystal, with no vegetation or flowers. It reminds us of a mixture of the Apocalypse and the heaven-idea of Early Christianity, which regarded the Empyrean outside the Ptolemaic spheres as the abode of God and the blest in general, as expounded in Dante's "Paradiso."

Dr. T. W. Wilson, while conforming to the seven-sphere theory, asserts that the First Sphere extends to the confines of the material universe, the others being therefore spheres only symbolically, for the immaterial can hardly be visualised as having shape. In the Seventh Sphere dwell God and Christ.[2] Dr. Wilson's information was received from high spirits through the mediumship of his son, and both seem to have been genuinely convinced of its authenticity. Dr. Wilson left a flourishing medical practice in England to bury himself in Rocky Mountain solitudes in order that the revelation might come in specially pure surroundings. He published three bulky volumes—in 1908, I think—of which very little has since been heard. There is nothing evidential in them, and the whole thing may have been subliminal in origin, based on acquaintance with the writings of Davis, Tuttle, or Hare. If so, it is tragic that an able and useful man's life should be so wrecked; such incidents should warn us against accepting communications too readily at their face value.

The Theosophical scheme, we may here recall, is somewhat similar, though less materialistic. Mr. Leadbeater, describing the seven subdivisions of the astral plane, says, "We must not fall into the mistake of thinking of them (or, indeed, of the greater planes of which they are only

[1] "Spirit Intercourse," pp. 158-9-60. [2] "Theocosmia."

subdivisions) as separate localities in space—as lying above one another like the shelves of a bookcase, or outside one another like the coats of an onion."[1] But he goes on to say that "the higher varieties of matter extend farther away from the physical earth than the lower,"[2] which seems to involve spatiality; so we are left rather puzzled. (Mr. Leadbeater says that the Summerland of the spiritualists corresponds to the first, second, and third subdivisions of the astral plane.) Mr. A. P. Sinnett also uses spatial terms, referring to "the higher spheres surrounding the physical planet."[3]

In all this, and much besides, it is difficult or impossible to decide how much each writer or medium has been influenced by previous teaching. Sir Oliver Lodge points out in his book "Raymond," in reference to the "unverifiable matter" which echoes almost exactly the doctrine of Hudson Tuttle, that the medium or control may pick up a good deal from sitters, and may retail it in good faith. Tuttle suggests that Professor Hare, having fixed

[1] "The Astral Plane," by C. W. Leadbeater, p. 17.

[2] *Loc. cit.*

[3] "Nineteenth Century and After," September, 1917; article, "Religion under Repair." The modern Theosophical doctrines are mostly drawn from Indian sources, which describe seven planes or Lokas, but they are planes of increasing spirituality rather than places; and we exist in some or all of them at the same time, withdrawing from the lowest between incarnations. ("Vishnu Purana," cited in "An Advanced Textbook of Hindu Religion and Ethics." Published by the Board of Trustees, Central Hindu College, Benares, 1905, p. 142.) It is possible enough that Davis also got his inspiration directly or indirectly from Indian sources, for his system has the idea of the indrawing of the universe into God and then a new forth-putting, which corresponds to the Day and Night of Brahma. These ideas were very much in the air in New England in Davis's time, as Emerson's writings show. (Poem, "Brahma," etc.) Professor H. H. Wilson's translation of the "Vishnu Purana" was published in 1840, and was read by Emerson, who was indisputably the greatest intellectual force in America during Davis's formative period.

up an after-death scheme to satisfy himself, would ask his medium leading questions—"how many spheres are there —seven?"; "is the third Summerland?" etc., etc.—and naturally get complete confirmation. On a subliminal theory of "controls," this is to be expected; and if a medium has sat with someone who accepts Davis's or Tuttle's ideas or something like them, the probable source of the sphere-teaching of that medium's control may be surmised; though we must remember, in fairness, that the ideas may be true, and not necessarily borrowed at all. And even in this latter case, the borrowing and retailing do not invalidate any evidence of identity that may be received. The communicator may be really there, but, communicating through the control, his messages get more or less mixed with thoughts in the latter's mind, whatever the control may be, spirit or secondary personality. But in my own investigations, which have yielded much evidence of identity of departed relatives and friends, I have had many references to gradual progress, but none to numbered spheres.

The nearest I should get to the sphere-idea, if I allowed imagination free play with a quasi-material "next world," would be a sort of compromise between Origen and Fechner. For example, consider the fact that fishes and many forms of life—mostly low forms—live in the sea, with an ocean of water round and above them. On the land, higher up, live higher forms, including ourselves, with an ocean of air above us. May it not be that higher up again there are still higher forms of life—namely, discarnate intelligences, with freedom and faculties and surroundings as far transcending ours as ours transcend those of a plaice on the sea-floor? True, we do not see these beings; but neither does the plaice see us. We are

not in its universe. To us, of course, the plaice and ourselves are in the same physical universe, because we have the larger view. Similarly, to God, discarnate spirits, incarnate human beings, animals, deep-sea life, and all their gradations, are seen as in the same universe, though the different orders, along certain lines of cleavage, do not perceive each other. In fact, it seems likely enough that the universe swarms with unseen life, interpenetrating the matter which we know. Certainly it is full of potential reality which we know nothing of, for our senses are adapted only to narrow ranges of stimulus. Our ears respond to atmospheric vibrations of 32 to 32,768 per second, our eyes to ethereal vibrations of 450,000,000,000,000 to 750,000,000,000,000 per second.[1] What our experience would be like if we could sense other rates we do not know. Thus, even arguing physically, there is much activity which we do not perceive; and it is reasonable to surmise that there are beings in whom this activity produces perception and is their world.

We can accordingly see that, however it may be as to the exact details of after-life conditions—whether lived in the upper air or elsewhere—we shall still be in a real world, for our organs will be of the same order as, and adapted to, the surroundings which we shall perceive with them, as they are in our present state.

As to spatial relations, this theory of discarnate life in the upper regions of the earth—in its airy ocean or envelope—is somewhat supported by various facts or traditions. Jesus ascended from His disciples' sight. The levitation of saints during moments of ecstasy, in which physical conditions may have been temporarily transcended,

[1] Sir William Crookes, Presidential Address, S.P.R. "Proceedings," xii., p. 350.

points similarly to a real correspondence between spiritual progress and actual movement away from the earth's centre. Clairvoyants see departing forms rising from the dying body. High ground is universally regarded as holier than low-lying land. Jehovah dwelt on His holy hill, Zeus and his train on Olympus. Christ will come to meet His followers in the air.

And in spiritualistic phenomena there must be some meaning in the so-frequently noted sensation of cold. This has never yet been explained. May we not hazard the guess that it is somehow connected with that higher abode of the blest, which, though not cold to its inhabitants whose senses are adapted to it, would be intensely cold to us; and that these descending souls bring down to some extent the conditions of their plane, so far as we are able to sense them—as a person coming in from a flower-garden may bring faintly perceptible traces of his previous surroundings?

Again, these descending souls often speak of the greater freedom of their state, as we might speak of ours to our hypothetical plaice; and they say, as we might say, how dense and unpleasant is the lower atmosphere. They cannot tell us much that we can understand about their life, except by comparing it with ours and affirming its greater happiness and fullness and beauty. And this is as much as we could do with our plaice, even if it had a human intelligence.

But all this is mere speculation, and is probably too materialistic. The official leaders among the spiritualists are wisely cautious about sphere-doctrines with their hard-and-fast numeration. There is no mention of them in the pamphlet already mentioned, "The Seven Principles of Spiritualism," by Mr. Hanson G. Hey, Secretary to the

Spiritualists' National Union. And it is not prominent in such books as Stainton Moses' "Spirit Teachings" and W. T. Stead's "After Death," which have probably had a larger circulation and influence than any other two spiritualistic publications. In these the teaching is very definite morally, but restrained descriptively. Man is the same being after death as he was before, except that he has sloughed off his physical body. He finds himself in conditions which are the result of the life he has lived on earth. He reaps what he there sowed. If he has done his best, used well such opportunities as he had, he will find himself in some degree in "heaven"; i.e., in a state much superior to his earth-state, though not an absolutely perfect one, for no one at physical death is good enough for such ultimate and inconceivable things. If he has used his opportunities badly, he will find himself in a state of discipline, as indeed the earth-life also is, and will remain there until he has learnt his lesson, when he will move on. But the "moving" is symbolic of change of state rather than place. The spirits probably still have some relation to space, particularly those who happen to be least spiritually-minded, but the relation is less close and less binding than during the physical life. And the occupations and surroundings are not described in detail, the representation in earthly terms of non-earthly things being impossible.

Constant stress is laid on character, and on Love as the important feature. There are degrees in heaven, and "the lowest heaven is higher than the most wonderful vision of its bliss you ever had"[1] (which is pleasanter than some of the rather nightmare-like teachings of the occultists and Theosophists regarding the astral plane), but we need not

[1] Stead's "After Death," p. 12.

concern ourselves with degrees. We shall experience them in due time, when we get there. The important thing, meanwhile, is to fit ourselves; to do the right thing here where we are; and for this the key-note is Love. "Hold fast to this central doctrine: Love is God, God is Love. It is only when we deeply, truly love, we find our true selves, or that we see the Divine in the person loved. . . . If I could come back and speak in the ears of the children of men, I think I should wish to say nothing but this—Love! . . . It is the Word which the world needs; it is the Word which became flesh and dwelt amongst men."[1]

And, as to mourning for the dead: "Is it then all mere talk that Christ brought life and immortality to light? Why is it that with the certainty of the continued existence of your loved ones you feel as disconsolate and forlorn as if there were no other world, and as if Christ had never triumphed over death and the grave?"[2] No one who really believes can ever feel sad at the promotion of our dear ones. "The measure of your grief is the measure of your unbelief. We who live in the atmosphere of the love of God are often sad at our own imperfections. But where the deed is not ours but His, when the fact is what His wisdom and love have accomplished, not what our selfishness and sin have brought about, then all sorrow is the register of the spiritual thermometer of our unbelief."[3]

The thought inevitably arises, as we have seen in dealing with Fechner's "With what body do they come?" and spiritualistic teaching on this head seems to be on the lines of the Pauline spiritual body. There is a spiritual counter-

[1] Stead's "After Death," pp. 14, 15.

[2] *Op. cit.*, p. 15.

[3] *Op. cit.*, pp. 17, 18. See also "The Undiscovered Country," by Harold Bayley (Cassell & Co., Ltd.), for a collection of automatic writings describing conditions over there.

part of the material body, but a so to speak improved version, which arises from the physical form at death. This is supported by many experiences of people who in illnesses from which they have recovered, or in other unusual states, have temporarily left their bodies, being quite consciously outside them—though connected by a "silvery thread," as some put it—and able to look down on the material vehicle lying apparently dead.[1] "When the soul leaves the body it is at the first moment quite unclothed as at birth. The spirit-body disengaged from the physical body is conscious, at least I was almost from the first." (This is unusual: a period of sleep usually follows.) "I awoke standing by my dead body, thinking I was still alive and in my ordinary physical frame. It was only when I saw the corpse in the bed that I knew that something had happened. When the thought of nakedness crosses the spirit there comes the clothing which you need. The idea with us is creative. We think, and the thing is."[2] Clothing on the other side seems to be at first a reproduction of earth-forms, but later a more "angelic" form of garment. It is a frequent thing for mediums to describe recently dead people as ordinarily dressed, and long dead or very spiritual people as draped in robes white and shining; and this when the medium has no normal knowledge of the people concerned, nor of the recency or remoteness of their death. There appears consequently to be some truth, whatever it may be, in this idea of progressive clothing.

Then as to the much-debated question of the "reality" of the other side. Julia Ames, as we have seen, testifies that the idea is creative and that clothes are made

[1] Several cases are described in my book "Man is a Spirit." Also see the famous case of Dr. Wiltse in "Human Personality."

[2] "After Death," pp. 26-7.

at once when the need is felt. Similarly Stainton Moses was told that not only clothes but also the landscape is in some sense the product of the spirit perceiving it. On one occasion, after clairvoyantly seeing scenes in spirit-land, Mr. Moses asked for information and received it by automatic writing as usual:

"These scenes, you say, are real—Material?"

"No; but real. What you call material is nothing to us. Just as the scenes that surround you depend on yourself—as, for instance, in respect of colour—so are these scenes that you have visited externalised by the spirit who dwells among them. With us it would be impossible for a spirit at peace with itself to dwell in the midst of desolation and confusion; even as the Vain Ones could not dwell in the Valley of Rest."

"In fact, then, a spirit makes its surroundings, and this is the meaning of the assertion so often made that we are building our house in spirit-land now?"

"Yes, just so. You are making your character, and according to your character will be your home and the surroundings. That is inevitable. All gravitate to their own place. Those flowers, and gems, and tinsel fripperies, the mirrors of the Vain Ones, and the peaceful calm of the Valley of Rest, these are but externalised symbols of those who dwell there."[1]

This may seem to conflict with the often-repeated statements of spirits that the life there is as real as it is here, or more so. It may seem that a thought-world created by each spirit must be a tenuous, individual, and phantasmagoric affair, as if each spirit were having his own hallucinations, so to speak, out of touch with his fellows. But the difficulty is, perhaps, only superficial. As

[1] "L.S.A. Addresses," p. 21. (Reprinted from *Light*.)

Berkeley said, our earth-life here, solid though it seems, is itself very much of an individual hallucination. No two people see the same thing, not only because the ether-tremors which strike A's eyes are not the same but only very like those that strike B's—for they view it from a slightly different point or at different times—but also because A's eyes and brain are different from B's and therefore cause him different sensations and perceptions. The similarity of our experience is enough to make life and mutual understanding possible, but the likeness is only approximate.

Consequently it may well be that though each spirit makes or conditions his own surroundings—as indeed he does here by the sensations and interpretations being his own—the next world will be neither less real nor less a common possession than the present one. Indeed, it may be more so. If spirits gravitate together according to like-mindedness and not in the heterogeneous fashion of our present existence, the surroundings of groups over there may be more nearly the same for each individual than is the case here; and may also, therefore, be more "real," for we decide degrees of reality largely by consensus of experience.

CHAPTER VIII

CONCLUSION

WHAT, then, is the net upshot of the matter? Let us recapitulate.

Belief in survival of bodily death had in the nineteenth century become a dead letter among people of scientific training or habit of mind. Exceptions there no doubt were, for great men like Faraday and Kelvin believed in a Super-nature, which left room for possible human survival; but, particularly after the biological advance associated with Darwin and his followers, which carried law and mechanistic conceptions into previously uninvaded territory, the belief in a real individual survival faded almost away for most scientific men and even for the thinking layman and priest, as Dr. Griffith-Jones says. It "receded from the foreground of consciousness," even in the minds of religious people. There was believed to be no modern *evidence* in its support; and, where still held, it was as a hope, held with "lame hands of faith," rather than a sure belief.

Then Spiritualism brought a true revival. It claimed to produce evidence of the same kind as that on which Christianity itself was based. Christ brought immortality to light by appearing to his followers after his death, thus demonstrating that he was still alive. Spiritualism said that ordinary human beings can do the same, manifesting in less tremendous ways if their strength and the conditions do not allow of the full visible and tangible presence

which Christ's greater power achieved, but still manifesting sufficiently to establish their existence and their identity. These things, indeed, had been happening all along the centuries, more or less, but had been neglected or reprobated by an uninquiring and prescientific age, largely dominated by a priesthood which naturally did its best to keep authority and power in its own hands. But now, in the modern atmosphere of free inquiry, the facts were plain to all who would seek.

Swedenborg had laid the foundations, by his own experiences—sometimes "evidential"—and by his doctrine of the similarity of the two worlds. In America his teaching coalesced with that of Mesmer and his disciples, and the popular mind was ready for the clairvoyant revelations of A. J. Davis and the objective phenomena of the Hydesville knockings. Davis taught a Swedenborgian continuity between the two worlds, but departed from the Swede's system by adopting a more Pythagorean, or more Early Christian, or more Indian scheme of progression through many heavens. This was upheld, with variations, by Tuttle, Hare, and other later spiritualists.

In England there had been considerable interest in mesmerism, but a definite spiritualistic element was introduced from America in the eighteen-fifties, when several mediums came over. These were mostly of the rapping variety, this form of mediumship being aimed at by those "developing," because the early manifestations had been of that type; but D. D. Home showed almost the whole gamut of mediumistic phenomena, and his genuine powers were attested by many legal and scientific men, among them Sir William Crookes (afterwards President of the Royal Society), Sir David Brewster, and Mr. Cromwell Varley. Most of Home's sitters seem to have

been converted to a spiritistic belief, and the most sceptical were forced to admit—if they investigated patiently—that a supernormal agency was at work. "That certain physical phenomena, such as the movement of material substances, and the production of sounds resembling electric discharges, occur under circumstances in which they cannot be explained by any physical law at present known, is a fact of which I am as certain as I am of the most elementary fact in chemistry. . . . But I cannot, at present, hazard even the most vague hypothesis as to the cause of the phenomena."[1] The distinguished chemist and courageous psychical investigator advanced to a spiritistic position after his remarkable experience of materialisation with Miss Cook.

The mediumship of W. Stainton Moses was the next notable event, and in his case there was no comprehensible motive for fraud, his sittings being given only to friends, without fee. Home similarly never asked a fee, but he probably received gifts and certainly received and enjoyed the hospitality of famous people. Mr. Moses, on the other hand, lived a quiet and hardworking life, supporting himself first as a curate and afterwards as a schoolmaster, and earning the respect of all who knew him. Fraud, moreover, was often apparently eliminated by the circumstances of the case, and it is impossible to account for the experiences of Mr. Moses' sitters without either admitting the agency of discarnate beings or inventing hypotheses of the most tortured kind regarding the assumed powers—and wickedness—of the incarnate "subliminal."

Meanwhile these strange happenings had begun to be seriously considered in academic circles, and, under the

[1] Sir William Crookes: "Researches in the Phenomena of Spiritualism," p. 3.

influence of Sir William Barrett the Society for Psychical Research was founded, with Professor Henry Sidgwick as President, and F. W. H. Myers and Edmund Gurney as chief workers. Starting very cautiously and without creed except that certain alleged phenomena were worthy of investigation, the Society did good work in hypnotic and thought-transference experiments, but speedily passed to wider fields in its investigation of Mrs. Piper. Dr. Richard Hodgson, who came to know more about her phenomena than any other living man, and who was utterly sceptical at first, grew completely convinced not only that the phenomena were supernormal, but that the communicators and controls were spirits, as they claimed to be. Several other leading members were equally or almost equally convinced—e.g., Sir Oliver Lodge and Mr. Myers—and the others fell back on telepathic suppositions. These, however, became increasingly difficult to maintain when the elaborate cross-correspondence evidence occurred later; and this, added to very complex evidence of classical knowledge given through non-classical automatists, led even the sceptical wing which may be considered as represented by Mrs. Sidgwick and Mr. G. W. Balfour to admit the reasonableness of a spiritistic interpretation of some of these curious happenings. Meanwhile, Sir William Barrett and many others had been convinced by their own experiments with private sensitives, quite apart from Mrs. Piper or the cross-correspondences.

Other lines of evidence point in the same direction, such as the haunting of houses as in the Wesley case and others similar, the physical phenomena of Eusapia Palladino, Miss Goligher, and the mediums investigated by Dr. Joseph Maxwell, and—very notably—the direct-voice

phenomena of Mrs. Wriedt, described by Admiral Moore. And strong support was also afforded by veridical apparitions and the like, dead people appearing to persons who were unaware of the death, or even, in some cases, of any illness or danger.

The same or similar mediumistic phenomena are stated to occur in India among people who are unacquainted with Western affairs, thus furnishing further support from an independent quarter. And the same claim is made, that they are due to departed human beings.

But belief in such things is a complex matter, and cannot be coerced by any possible evidence. Alternative hypotheses—subliminal memory, or telepathy, or other things if necessary—are always possible. And even among believers there are degrees. Some psychical researchers approximate closely to the spiritualists who believe that all trance controls are genuine spirits, while others, though believing in survival and communication, are in doubt about "controls," who seem more like channels in the medium's subliminal than separate entities—though indeed in a sense they may be both, for the unitary nature of the human spirit can hardly be considered certain, and we may each be a congeries of spiritual parts. This, however, like other problems, is for the facts to decide. Those who have faith in scientific method are willing to follow wherever the facts lead, in this as in other questions. For the present it is sufficient that psychical research, however its workers may differ on points of detail, has certainly brought those who have had the most experience to a position of belief in human survival and at least occasional communication, and the difference between spiritualist and psychical researcher has consequently become a difference in amount of caution in face

of each new phenomenon rather than any serious divergence in ultimate opinion.

Spiritualism, however, is a wider thing than mere belief in survival and communication, as Christianity was a wider thing, even in its beginnings, than belief in the Resurrection; though in each case the phenomena furnished the basis or nucleus. Spiritualism is a religion or cult, teaching the Fatherhood of God, the essential Brotherhood of Man, personal responsibility, rewards and punishments for the life lived in the body, and an endless progression. It is a form of Christianity, as the Greek, Roman, and Anglican Churches are, on a larger scale. And when one reads the works of the Ante-Nicene Fathers —the great Christians of the first three centuries of our era —one is tempted to think that the spiritualist's belief is more Christian, judged by those standards nearest to the time of Christ, than is much of the Christianity of to-day. Spiritualism may, indeed, be regarded as a sort of revival of true Christianity, the present Christian Churches having sunk into the similar stiff and objective conservatism of the Jews which Christ came to replace. Orthodoxy, then, having almost lost its belief, as seen in our first chapter (p. 5), spiritualists had to start another sect which should affirm the truth no longer clearly taught from "orthodox" pulpits.

As with all new truths, Spiritualism has never lacked opponents. The materialists—within and without the Church—said that the alleged phenomena either could not happen or could be explained without recourse to spirits if they did happen; though the said critics showed a singular unwillingness to provide explanations in detail, mostly confining themselves to crude assumptions of fraud —a hypothesis which, as Sir William Barrett has shrewdly

said—works very well until one begins to learn something of the subject by real investigation. After 3,000 years one might expect that everyone would agree that "he that answereth a matter before he heareth it, it is folly and shame unto him."[1] But the materialists probably do not read the Book of Proverbs, so we cannot expect them to have profited by its wisdom; nor by the example of the people of Berea, who searched "whether these things were so, therefore many of them believed."[2] Knowledge is not to be had without search. People must come and see, and if their prejudices are so strong, either against the possibility of any good thing coming out of Nazareth or against any unexpected thing coming out of any other equally obscure region, that they will not trouble to come and see, they will remain unenlightened. That is their affair. And in many instances they are doing useful work where they are, and are not to be blamed for not investigating, but only for judging without knowledge.

The Roman Catholic agrees that the things happen, but says—also without investigation, which his Church discourages—that they are diabolic; and, appealing to the fears of the ignorant, warns the public off. But the devil-theory is not proven, and those of us who have investigated for many years without finding anything to support it, are naturally disinclined to accept it. Says Myers: "The terror which shaped primitive theologies still tinges for the populace every hint of intercourse with disembodied souls. The transmutation of savage fear into scientific curiosity is of the essence of civilisation. Towards that transmutation each separate fragment of our evidence, with undesigned concordance, indisputably tends. In that faintly opening world of spirit I can find nothing worse than living men;

[1] Proverbs, ch. xviii., 13. [2] Acts, ch. xvii., 11.

I seem to discern not an intensification but a disintegration of selfishness, malevolence, pride."[1] While agreeing with the Catholic that psychical investigation is not for everyone (nor, indeed, is anatomical investigation), we are unable to see that any satisfactory case can be made out for a wholesale devil-theory and a general prohibition.

Both religionists and materialists fall back at need on telepathy, but materialists do so with hesitation, for, though helping to "explain" without spirits, it opens another door to them on the opposite side, by allowing the probability of a spiritual world in general. No physical theory of telepathy has been worked out—there are no "brain-waves" known, and no receiving stations yet discovered inside our skulls—and the thing does not seem to accord with the law of inverse squares or the equal propagation in all directions which physical law would require. It is increasingly probable that telepathy is a psychical not a physical fact; that it takes place in a spiritual world, between mind and mind rather than between brain and brain. And of course if a spiritual world is rendered probable by the facts of telepathy, our materialistic friends are really hoist with their own petard in invoking it as an alternative to spirits. The weapon turns and hits them in another place. Accordingly the rationalist Mr. Joseph McCabe, perceiving this, recants his opinion that the evidence for telepathy is satisfactory, but is then reduced to silence, for, if telepathy is not a fact, there is no avoiding the terrible superstition of spirits. One feels rather sorry for these harassed rationalists nowadays. However, the remedy is in their own hands. They require to be more rationalistic; to apply their reason to investi-

[1] "Human Personality," vol. ii., p. 78.

gation instead of ignorantly denying, swayed by emotional bias.[1]

As to Protestant criticisms, the strongest is, perhaps, that of the Bishop of Oxford, who fears that attention to psychical phenomena may turn the mind away from higher things. But this may be said of attention to any sort of phenomena—i.e., of science in general; though there is perhaps special likelihood in the psychical case because it adjoins the religous consciousness. No doubt what the Bishop fears is preoccupation with external evidence of a spiritual world, to the damage of inner development. Admittedly this caution is worth careful consideration.

Human energy can be used to enlarge experience in many directions, and what we seek is how best to achieve a wise balance. India, for example, has concentrated on the inner way of mysticism, and has stagnated externally. Greece awoke to the external, and developed unparalleled sense of beauty, with keen intellect. Rome harnessed all its powers to the external aims of Empire, and lost its soul, as Germany has done. The downfall of Rome—there being nothing unitary to put in its place—brought intellectual night on Europe for a thousand years, until the Renaissance. Science appeared, and objective inquiry won great results. The three or four hundred years between Bacon and the present day brought greater changes than history had to show in all the times before; e.g., before the introduction of railways in the eighteen-forties, the methods of travelling were what they had been in Julius Cæsar's day—no better. And now we have aeroplanes which travel faster than any train, and we com-

[1] For discussion of this, and for a philosophic treatment of the whole subject of Mind and Matter relationship, see Dr. William McDougall's admirable volume " Body and Mind " (Methuen).

municate with the ends of the earth, almost instantaneously, by that new miracle which we call electricity. But we need more than this objective conquering of the forces of nature. Objective power is good, but it must be rightly used. Concentration on its acquisition is apt to lead to spiritual blindness and wrong uses. Mephistopheles was all intellect, with no morals or spirituality.

We seem to need a blending of East and West. We must retain our scientific gains, but must extend our vision beyond the material. We must see the universe as a spiritual thing of which the material world is a part. And to those who have no religious experience of their own—no first-hand inner touch with unseen Intelligence—this perception of wider horizons seems likely to be best awakened by the new science called psychical research. It follows the method now trusted by the modern man, and it leads out of the material scheme into wider realities. Nay, even for those who have or have had inner experiences, it likewise brings an otherwise unattainable help and liberation; or at the least a confirmation not easily to be over-estimated. Thus it was with F. W. H. Myers. For when he found that the evidence for the central fact of his faith was insufficient for the structure of belief erected upon it, he honestly surrendered that belief, bitter though the loss to him was. But after thirty years of psychical research he found his earlier faith confirmed and far more firmly established, and could say: "I recognise that for me this fresh evidence—while raising that great historic incident of the Resurrection into new credibility—has also filled me with a sense of insight and of thankfulness such as even my first ardent Christianity did not bestow." [1]

Survival and communication having been established,

[1] "Human Personality," vol. ii., p. 295.

and criticisms materialistic and religious having been met, we reach the question of the nature of the future life. Fechner provides for survival without loss of continuity, by supposing that the body used by the spirit is composed of the material particles which were influenced by the spirit during its earth life. The whole material creation is regarded as saturated with spirit, and our souls are parts of the Earth-Spirit—and ultimately of the Spirit who vivifies whilst also transcending the material universe —as our bodies are parts of the earth and ultimately of the material creation in general. Fechner was to some extent acquainted with early spiritualistic phenomena and conceptions. He had sat with Slade the medium, and was impressed though not convinced. But he remarks, in his latest summing up,[1] that his system will accommodate alleged spiritualistic facts if necessary.

The main current of spiritualistic thought about the nature of the after-life is, however, simpler and possibly truer than Fechner's, though indeed both may be true. Spiritualism makes no official pronouncement beyond the fact of progress, but tends to the conception of an improved version of the earth-life, free from physical ills, but lived in what, for want of better terms, we may call a body—perhaps made of Ether—which refines and glorifies with progress.

This inevitably brings to the mind beautiful narratives which some of us once renounced as mythical, but which we may now regard, without violation of our scientific consciences, as at least possibly true. The angel (and *angelos* means "messenger," not necessarily non-human) who rolled away the stone had an appearance "as lightning, and his raiment white as snow" (Matthew

[1] "Die Tagesansicht Gegenüber der Nachtansicht."

xxviii. 3). In Mark (xvi. 5) the angel is called "a young man" sitting on the right side, arrayed in a white robe. Luke tells of two "men," but again there is "dazzling apparel" (xxiv. 4), and John has "two angels in white" (xx. 12). And the angel (Acts x. 3) or man (x. 30) who appeared to Cornelius was, again, in "bright apparel." All this, with the robes "white and glistering" of the Transfiguration, the halos of saints, and the like, may be airily dismissed by the sceptic, who will say that light is always associated with goodness, and that hallucinatory forms of angels will naturally be luminous or white-robed. But when we find that sensitives to-day see spirits—named, described, and identifiable—in gradation of radiance according to their character, though the sensitive (and sometimes even the sitter) has no normal knowledge of the people concerned, it must be admitted that the fact has some bearing on those earlier and less well-evidenced narratives. As in the case of Troy, we are finding, over and over again, that ancient documents are much truer, in the exact literal sense, than has been supposed. These angelic appearances, probably of good human beings who had passed on to the brighter realms, are now credible enough. The fact of goodness and its degree being indicated to the clairvoyant eye—and even in striking cases to ordinary eyes—by *light,* is on the way to full establishment by contemporary observation.

The progress symbolised by this increasing brightness, is, according to Stainton Moses' controls, a gradual dropping of limitations and imperfections, until personality becomes different from what we understand by that term, and indeed different from anything we can conceive. "Imperator" was said to be more like an "influence" than a person, so far as his action on our plane was concerned,

he having reached a stage of development very far transcending ours. Perhaps Dante's "Paradiso" contains the highest truth that has yet been uttered on this head, though the reality is inevitably beyond our comprehension.

As to the gradations before such remoteness is reached, some spiritualists and most Theosophists have adopted a scheme of sevenfold spheres or planes, more or less definitely spatial. But the tendency of the central spiritualistic current, so to speak, is to avoid a too concrete system. We have high authority for the belief that our Father's house has many tarrying-places,[1] but attempts to portray their details are probably unwise, our this-life conceptions being unequal to anything more than an adumbration of experiences so different. It is enough that survival is a fact, communication possible, progress infinite; that the spiritual and the material are parts of the same Cosmos, similar laws holding sway in each.

A clerical reviewer of a recent book of mine complained that I nowhere stated my belief regarding Christ. It seemed a curious objection, and it had not occurred to me that anyone would expect Christology in a book mainly describing psychical investigations. Somewhat similarly with this present volume. Though touching on philosophy, theology, and religion, I do not see that it is necessary for me to deal with technical theological details on which I am incompetent to pronounce. But for the satisfaction of the aforesaid clerical reviewer and others who may share his desire, I will risk a word or two on this perilously controversial point, which I should have preferred to avoid.

Spiritualists seem for the most part to be uninterested

[1] John xiv. 2. (Alternative reading to "mansions.")

in the subtleties of the Trinitarian doctrine. All venerate the person and teaching of Jesus, which are of more importance than the arguments of theologians concerning him. I sympathise with this attitude. I think it would be the attitude of Jesus himself if he were again here in the flesh amongst us. Not those who are occupied with saying "Lord, Lord!" but he that loveth his neighbour, acting accordingly, is the true Christian. But if I am pushed farther and asked: "Do you then believe that Christ was only a man?" I reply that I do not know. I do not see that I can reasonably be expected to know. The records of his life are scanty, and were not written down until many years after his death; their correctness is, therefore, far less certain than the correctness, say, of the records of Sir William Crookes's experiments alluded to in this volume. If spiritualistic evidence is not sufficient to produce belief in an unprejudiced mind, the Biblical evidence is far less so. The Christian believer who rejects spiritualist evidence must admit that he is not logically consistent.

But again: when I am asked whether I think that Christ was only a man, I stumble over that word "only." Is a man necessarily such a despicable thing, at his highest reach, that it is blasphemy to credit Jesus with no more than humanity? It might be, if all men were on my own low level, I admit. But what of saintly men like Emerson, Keble, St. Francis, and multitudes of others? Where are the upper limits of human potentiality?

> Draw, if thou canst, the mystic line,
> Severing rightly his from thine,
> Which is human, which divine.[1]

[1] Emerson: Essay on "Worship."

I believe that Jesus himself would never have spoken even of the meanest as *only* a man. He thought well of mankind, as being sons of God; he taught us to pray to a Father who is ours as well as his.[1] Indeed, he definitely classed himself with us. "Why callest thou me good? None is good save one, even God." (Mark x. 18; Luke xviii. 19.)

But there is more to say, even than this. I do *not* assert that Jesus was only a man. I do not know what he was. He came in the form of humanity, but some of his healing and other powers, as well as his teaching and life and the tremendous effect thereof, suggest that he was, at least, greater than any human being of whom we have reliable or fairly reliable accounts. If Buddha was an actual man, he may have been a similar being, for his effect on the world has also been immense, his followers numbering 500 millions. But Gautama is very dimly historical, and so are Zoroaster, Lao-Tze, and Confucius. So—accepting as broadly true the Gospel narratives, and remembering the unquestionable effect of that alleged life—we will venture to say that Jesus was the highest being, the fullest manifestation of God, that the earth has known in historical times. I have no objection, therefore, to anyone regarding him as a superhuman being, far above our level. In an infinite universe there are probably infinite grades of spiritual existence, and Jesus may have belonged to some order higher than ours. I admit that I have felt this about Emerson. Not only his writings, but also the records of his life, with the comments of those who knew him well, make me feel that he was so much greater and better than I, that it is with a certain surprise and hesitancy that I think of him

[1] Cf. John, xx. 17; viii. 38 to end.

as of my own genus, "only a man." Consequently I sympathise with those who, being rightly humble about their own persons but perhaps rating others and human possibilities in general too low, feel the necessity of regarding Jesus as more than man. They have a right to their opinion, and humility is a great virtue. All men, and indeed all created intelligences, are sons of the same Father, and many of our Elder Brothers will pass the "mystic line" at the upper limit of humanity, becoming "divine," but not necessarily God Himself. Of these great spirits we know little. We may regard them as the Hindoos do, as incarnating on our own plane from time to time, as Krishna, as Jesus, voluntarily and for the salvation of men. It is right, in a sense, to worship them, even; for their worth-ship, their value to the world, is incalculable. Some think the time is now ripe for such another Avatar. Who knows? It may be so.

But to me, and I suppose to most spiritualists also, knowledge of the exact nature of these great souls does not seem likely to be necessary to salvation. Being greater than we, they are not to be fully comprehended by us; but the same is true of our admittedly human superiors, and we do not know where to draw the line and say "anything above this is superhuman." The important thing is for us to get the spirit of these great ones' teaching; to perceive their greatness and to attune our will to theirs. Revelation is progressive. God is not dead. The exact amount of individual contributions, and the nature and size of the individual, are relatively unimportant; the main thing is that the revelation was made. Occasionally one wave in the advancing tide is greater than others, but the extent of its superiority is a secondary matter. The main thing

is that the tide rises; the intellectual and spiritual inflooding of God proceeds.

We may say, then, that spiritualism is a form of religion, and a good one. Other forms will do well to learn from it and not be repelled by crudenesses which are inevitable in the circumstances. Its phenomena will, in course of time, be distributed among different sciences, for the whole thing is probably much less simple than is popularly supposed. It is not all illusion, or all subliminal consciousness, or all discarnate spirits. Air was formerly thought to be an element, but now we know it to be a mixture of many gases in different proportions; and now even their atoms turn out to be further divisible. Similarly, the causes of spiritualistic phenomena may be very diverse, and some of them may be quite unknown at present. It would be absurd to suppose that all the agencies in the Universe are known to us. Also new phenomena may present themselves. Some of us have recently witnessed something of the sort. Entirely new beliefs, now quite below the horizon, may arise, based on real evidence. But, for the present, the spiritualistic belief may be called good, even by those who are not spiritualists in the sense of being members of the sect. We repeat its principles:

1. The Fatherhood of God.
2. The Brotherhood of man.
3. Continuous existence.
4. Communion of Spirits and Ministry of Angels.
5. Personal responsibility.
6. Compensation and Retribution Hereafter for good or ill done on earth.
7. A path of Endless Progression.

GLOSSARY

Apports.—Objects alleged to be brought by spirits at certain séances; e.g., flowers from the garden, or coins, gems, etc., from distant places.

Astral.—A theosophical term meaning the first stage after the physical life. The "astral body" is the vehicle of the spirit on the "astral plane."

Automatic writing.—Any writing produced by muscular action but without conscious will; most automatists can use a pencil thus, and are independent of planchette, which usually requires two persons.

Automatism.—Action without conscious thought and will, as when planchette moves and the persons touching it are not aware of having pushed it. Sometimes applied to trance speech, etc., also.

Clairaudience.—Supernormal hearing. A sensitive sometimes hears spirits give their names, or messages.

Clairvoyance.—Commonly applied to any supernormal vision, e.g., Swedenborg's perception of the Stockholm fire—but particularly to the "discerning of spirits." Psychical workers have suggested that it should be used for cases in which telepathy from another mind is excluded, e.g., seeing and naming a drawn card which no one has looked at.

Crystal-gazing.—On looking into a glass or crystal ball, some people see landscapes, faces, writing, etc. Usually these are of subliminal creation, externalised dreams, so to speak, like most planchette messages. But occasionally there is reason to believe that true clairvoyance, or telepathy from the living or the dead, is shown. And in rare cases the visions are objective and can be seen by all present.

Daimon.—A spirit or genius, as in the case of Socrates' friendly voice.

Direct writing.—Writing said to be done by direct spirit power, as when a pencil stands up "of itself" and writes. Though surprising, it is only an extension of movements without contact, showing intelligence, as in poltergeist cases and the mediumship of Eusapia Palladino.

Discarnate.—Out of the flesh body: in the spirit state; preferable to "disembodied" because spirits probably still have a body of some sort, but it is not made of flesh.

Elohim.—A Hebrew plural noun sometimes used in the Old Testament instead of Jehovah. Thus used, it is a "plural of intensity" (Delitzsch), but it is also used for gods or spirits.

Elongation.—A rare phenomenon; the stretching of a medium's body, said to have occurred with D. D. Home, W. Stainton Moses, and a few others, to the extent of six or nine inches.

Evidential.—Furnishing evidence; tending to prove. Used by psychical investigators, for brevity, as meaning "furnishing evidence sufficient to justify a hypothesis of some supernormal causation."

Fourierism.—A form of socialism, founded by François M. C. Fourier (1772-1837). The inhabitants of the world were to live in communities of 1,800 persons, all workers and all adequately paid. The scheme was developed in great detail, and Fourier is still worth reading.

Genii.—Spirits, good or evil, supposed to preside over the destiny of persons or places. See *Daimon*.

Hallucination.—A percept which lacks, but which only by reflection can be recognised as lacking, an objective basis. Different from illusion, which is a misinterpretation of something really there.

Hypnoid.—Sleep-like, sleep being here understood rather as "hypnotic" sleep.

Hypnotism.—The science or art of producing an unusual kind of sleep in which the subliminal powers are active and accessible.

Inductive.—Founded on observable fact.

Irvingite.—Follower of Edward Irving (1792-1834), founder of the "Catholic and Apostolic Church," who believed in the supernatural "gift of tongues" and prophecy as continuous and not confined to the early days of Christianity.

Levitation.—Objects being "made light" and rising in the air without normal cause. The weight (reaction) is added to some other person or thing in the neighbourhood of the objects raised.

L.S.A.—London Spiritualist Alliance, Ltd.

Materialisation.—Appearance of spirits in visible and tangible form, mostly at séances.

Medium.—A person through whom, in any way, a discarnate spirit communicates or manifests.

Mesmerism.—Same as hypnotism (q.v.) but with the supposition of an effluence from the mesmeriser.

Multiple personality.—Several "selves" in the same person, usually with memories not coincident but overlapping. R. L. Stevenson's "Dr. Jekyll and Mr. Hyde," though fiction, is almost paralleled in fact by many cases on record. There is no physiological explanation yet.

Nebular hypothesis.—The hypothesis that the solar system condensed from a nebula or mass of glowing gas. (Kant and Laplace.)

Neo-Platonism.—The philosophy of Plotinus and his school; Plato's teaching developed into mysticism.

Objective.—External; real to the senses, actually or potentially; not merely hallucinatory.

Okapi.—A giraffe-like animal of Central African forests.

Osmosis.—Chemical term for permeation of a membrane by fluids.

Ouija.—Usually a board with the letters of the alphabet on it; with a pointer attached to a movable piece of wood on which two people place their hands. Messages may be obtained if the persons have the necessary constitution, and they are unaware of pushing; but the communications are often dream-like, and are probably of subliminal creation generally, though not always.

Percept.—The inner or psychological aspect of things perceived: a perception; result of observation of anything.

Percipient.—One who perceives; but used in psychical research as meaning a perceiver of something unusual, e.g., a telepathic impression, or apparition, etc.

Physical phenomena.—Movement of objects without normal cause; also sounds so produced, as in the "direct voice."

Planchette.—A small heart-shaped board resting on two wheels and a pencil, which writes when moved. Two people place their fingers lightly on the board, which may then move without their volition. See *Ouija*.

Poltergeist.—A noisy spirit.

Psychometry.—The gathering of information about the history of an object or its owner, by handling it. The thing is a fact, but how it comes about is unknown, even to the psychometrist.

Rechabite.—Member of an Order of total abstainers from alcoholic drinks. (Jeremiah, xxxv. 6.)

Reincarnation.—The doctrine that the human spirit animates several successive earth-bodies.

Secondary personality.—See *Multiple Personality*.

Sensitives.—People capable of receiving psychic impressions: an alternative to "automatist" and "medium"; often preferable, being more non-committal as to theories of cause of the impression.

Shakers.—A New England religious sect, founded by Ann Lee, living in a socialist community. So called because of abnormal phenomena at revivals.

Shaman.—A wizard priest of some Turanian tribes (Siberia).

Slate-writing.—Supposed to be produced by spirits, slate usually held under table by medium and sitter. Difficult to exclude substitution by sleight of hand of another slate on which the writing had already been prepared. There are other dodges also. Nevertheless imitation does not prove that the thing is never genuine.

S.N.U.—Spiritualists' National Union.

S.P.R.—Society for Psychical Research.

Subconsciously.—Without consciously willing or knowing. Same as subliminal.

Subjective.—Inner. Not objective (q.v.). A subjective hallucination is a perception which has no cause external to the percipient.

Subliminal.—Below the threshold of ordinary consciousness: the dream level, also including apparently many modes of knowing and much thinking which we are only beginning to learn about.

Supernormal.—Beyond ordinary experience or what is recognised by orthodox science; e.g., telepathy.

Supraliminal.—Above the threshold; within the normal waking consciousness.

Taoism.—One of the three chief religions of China. A sort of mysticism. Founded by Lao-Tze, about 600 B.C.

Telepathy.—Communication between mind and mind by channels other than the known sensory ones.

Teraphim.—Images of human figure, representing ancestors or gods. A Hebrew plural, of uncertain derivation.

Theurgy.—Magic, worked by supernatural agencies; not a usual term nowadays.

Trance-control.—The spirit (or, on another hypothesis, a fraction of the medium's mind) which uses a medium's body when its normally actuating self is in abeyance.

Veridical.—Truth-telling; conveying true information.

World-Soul.—The spirit which by some philosophers (e.g., Fechner and the early Stoics) is looked on as manifesting through the material world as human spirits manifest through their bodies.

INDEX

A

Abercromby, Blanche (Case of), 65
Aeneid, 10, 11, 12, 214
America, Spiritualism in, 177
Ammianus Marcellinus, 13
Ancestors, Worship of, 13
Angels, 26, 28-9, 254-5
Ante-Nicene Fathers, 249
Apparitions, 116-21, 222
Astral plane, 121, 196
Australia, Spiritualism in, 178

B

Bacon, 7
Baggally, W. W., 101
Balfour, Rt. Hon. A. J., 7 *note*
,, Rt. Hon. G. W., 88, 126-7, 247
Barrett, Sir William, 70, 93, 98, 105-6, 111-12, 247, 249
Beard, S. H., telepathic phantasm-projection, 118-19
Belief, 4
Benja case, The, 133
Bergson, Prof. H., 7 *note*, 97 *note*, 224
Berkeley, 227, 243
Biblical spiritualism, 8, 254-5
Bishop of Chelmsford, 200
Blanche Poynings' case of subliminal memory, 130
Bodies, Next-life, 217-18, 221
Boehme, Jacob, 29
Book of the Secrets of Enoch, 230
Brahma, 235
Brahmanic scheme, The, 115
Brain function, 182
Buddha, 258
Burns, pan-psychism, 212

C

Caldecott, Prebendary, 204
Capron, E. W., 41
Carpenter, Dr., 44
Carpenter, Ed., 10 *note*
Carrington, H., 101
Census of Hallucinations, 116-17
Cevennes inspirational speaking, 15
Character determines state, 239
Charles, Dr. R. H., 15, 230
Chelmsford, Bishop of, 200
Chinese spiritualism, 13
Christ, 4, 194-5, 210, 237, 244, 256-8
Christian, The, 200
Church Family Newspaper, 204
Cicero, 19, 30
Circles, Private, 173
Cities in heaven (Swedenborg), 28
Clairvoyance, 121-4, 133, 172
Classical matter in Mrs. Piper's script, 78-80
Clement of Alexandria, 231
Clodd, Edward, 73, 184-6
Cold breeze at sittings, 103
Coleridge, polyglossal servant-girl, 128
Coleridge, world-soul idea, 212
Colville, W. J., 172
Composite pseudo-personality, 105
Consciousness, Dissociation of, 172
Conservatism, Roman, 192
Controls, Nature of, 131, 174

Cook, Florence, 57, 246
Cox, Serjeant, 61-2, 70
Crawford, Dr. (Physical Phenomena), 105-6, 111, 174
Crookes, Sir William, 47, 57, 106, 113-14, 137, 237, 245-6
Cross-correspondence, 84-7, 89
Crucial cases, 132

D

Daimons, 14
Dangers of Spiritualism, 196
Danté and many heavens, 232 (*Paradise*), 256
Dark Sittings, 107, 174
Darwin and Biology, 244
Darwin's absorption in Science, 198
Davenport Brothers, 49, 50
Davis, A. J., 33-6, 115, 232, 245
Davy, Sir Humphry, 183
Deception by subliminals, 89
Dee, Dr., 16
De Morgan, Prof., 44
Devil-theory of Spiritualism, 191-6
Dialectical Society, 51-6
Direct Voice, 106-7
Discoveries always ridiculed, 183
Donkin, Sir Bryan, 188
Dorr, G. B., 78-9
Douglas, Lord Alfred, 191
Doyle, Sir A. Conan, 98, 202, 206
Duguid, David, 56
Dying people met by friends, 122-4

E

"Ear of Dionysius" incident, 88
East and West, blend necessary, 253
Edmunds, Judge, 43
Eeden, F. van, 83
Eglinton, Wm., 57-8
Egyptian literature, survival in, 12, 13
Elliotson, Dr., and hypnotism, 183
Elohim, 15, 194
Emerson, 28, 33, 257
English Review, 182
Epworth haunt, 94-5, 116, 247
Evening News, 203
Everitt, Mrs., 50
Experimental verification, 189

F

Fairies, 105
Faith in Science, 193, 196, 248
Faraday, 44
Fechner, G. F., 89, 90, 212-27, 236, 254
Feilding, Hon. E., 72, 101
Flammarion, Prof. C., 100
Flints with bones of extinct animals, 183
Fox girls (mediums), 40
France, Spiritualism in, 177
Freewill, 4
Function of brain transmissive, 182

G

Gabriel, 16
Gautama, 258
Genii, 14
Germany, Spiritualism in, 178
Ghosts, 116-25
Globular lightning, 116
Gods, communications from, 14, 15
,, Heathen, as devils, 194
"G. P.," 76-7, 132
Greece, 13, 252
Greek and Roman Ghost stories (Collison-Morley), 11 *note*
Griffith-Jones, Dr. E., 5, 244
Guppy, Mrs., 51
Gurney, Edmund, 70, 116

H

Halifax, Lord, 73
Hallucinations, 116

Hare, Prof., 38-9, 233
Harrison, Frederic, 181
Haunts, 11
Haweis, Rev. H. R., 7
Hayden, Mrs., 44
"Heaven and Hell" (Swedenborg's), 24-8
Heavens, Plurality of, 230-2
Hell, 3, 27, 151, 202, 229
Herschel, Sir John, 180
Hey, Hanson G., 144
Hibbert Journal, 215
Hodgson, Dr. Richard, 75-7, 100, 247
Holland, Mrs., Automatic Writing, 85
Holmes, O. W., 32-3
Home, D. D., 45-8, 54, 96, 137, 245
Howitt's "History of Supernatural," 13, 16, 29
Huxley, 51-2
Hydesville knockings, 40-2
Hymns, 148, 150, 164-5
Hypnotism, 172
Hyslop, Prof. J. H., 78

I

"Imperator," etc., 63-4
Impersonal down-leaking from spiritual world, 90
India, Psychical phenomena in, 109-15, 248
Inductive proof, 226
Insanity allegations, 201
Inspirational speakers, 172
Intermediate state, 196, 229
International Psychic Gazette, 146, 186
Irvingite gift of tongues, 15, 16

J

James, Prof. Wm., 74-5, 181
Jonson, Ben (apparition of son), 118
Joyful News, 201, 204-5, 207
Jung-Stilling, 21, 31

K

Kabbala, 230
Kant, 21-2
Kardec, Allan, 177
Keats's *Pot of Basil*, 11
Keighley, Spiritualism in, 49
Kelvin, Lord, 244
King, John (Eusapia's control), 104
Koran, 230
Krishna, 259

L

Lang, Andrew, on Huxley, 184; on mediums, *ib.*, 186
Lankester, Sir E. Ray, 187-8
Latent telepathy, 117, 133
Laws against mediumship, 178
Lazarus and Dives, 207-8
Leadbeater, C. W., on astral plane, 234
Leibnitz, 212
Lethe incident, 78-9
Levitation, 47, 54, 62, 111
Levitical prohibitions, 206
Lewes, G. H., 51
Lodge, Sir Oliver, 75, 85, 91-3, 100, 187-8, 194-5, 198, 214, 235, 247
Lombroso, Prof. C., 97
London Spiritualist Alliance, 145-6
Loudun, Diables de, 15
Love, the main thing, 239
Lyceum, Spiritualists', 167
Lytton on apparitions, 121

M

McCabe, Joseph, 187, 251
Macleod, Fiona, World-soul idea of, 212
Materialisation, 56-9
Materialised hands (Eusapia), 103
Materialistic objections, 180-190
Maxwell, Dr. J., 104 (raps)
Memory, 217

Mercier, Dr. Chas., 73, 189
Mesmer, 31
Mill, J. S., 227
Milton, 93
Moore, Admiral W. Usborne, 107, 146
Morse, J. J., 145, 174
Moses, Wm. Stainton, 60-9, 246, 255
Movement without contact, 102-3, 105
Multiple Personality, 131, 173-4
Münsterberg, Prof. H., 180
Myers, F. W. H., 9, 13, 46, 66-8, 75, 78, 84-6, 96, 100, 116, 119-20, 143, 175, 195, 214, 247, 250, 253
Mystical objections, 191-9
Mysticism, 252

N

Naples sittings with Eusapia, 101-4
" Nelly " control, 82
Neo-Platonism, 13, 14
New York Herald, 185
New Zealand, Spiritualism in, 178
Nichol, Dr., Materialisations, 58
Non-Spatiality of Spiritual World (Swedenborg), 27

O

Oaten, E. W., on Spiritualism and lunacy, 202
Objective method, Roman hostility to, 196
Operations in hypnotic trance, 183
Origen, 228, 231, 236
Ouija, 13, 93
Ovid, 79, 88
Oxford, Bishop of, 208-11, 252

P

" Pagan and Pope " script, 86-7
Palladino, Eusapia, 50, 99-104, 106
Pan-psychism, 212-27
Phantasms of the Living, 117, 223
Phelps, Dr. (poltergeist), 42-3
Phenomena and Noumena, 225
Phinuit, Dr., 76, 131-2
Physical Phenomena, 94-108, 174-5
Piper, Mrs., 74-82, 126, 185
Pitris, The, 109, 113
Planes, 121, 196
Plato, 182
Pliny, Ghost story in, 11
Plutarch, 9, 10, 14
Podmore, Frank, 31, 43-4, 95-6, 116, 183, 186-7
Poltergeists, 42-3, 94-6, 98
Porphyry on spirits, 12
Post-mortem sleep, 124, 241
Poynings, Blanche, 130
Prince, Dr. Morton, 174
Private circles, 173
Proof of survival, coercive, not possible, 133-5, 226
,, Legal aspect of, 134-5
,, Must be cumulative, 133
Protestant Objections, 200-11
Psychical research essentially scientific, 189; proving preamble of all religions, 194
Psychology of Belief, 135-9, 248
Psychometry, 219-20
Public clairvoyance, 147-65
Purgatory, 229
Pythagoras on apparitions, 12

R

Raps, 62, 95, 104, 110
Reality of next life, 241-3
Reason a divine gift, 197
Reincarnation, 177
Renouf, P. le Page, 12 *note*, 121
Resurrection, The, 4, 249
Richet, Prof. C., 100, 106
Roman Catholic objections, 191-9, 250

Rome, Script incident *re*, 86-7
,, Spiritualism in, 14

S

St. Paul, 229
Saints, Prayers to, 194
Schrenk-Notzing's materialisations, 106
Secondary personality, 131, 173
Sectarianism, 143
Secular tone of spiritualist meetings, 171
Sidgwick, Mrs., 116-17, 126, 132, 247
Sidgwick, Prof., 70, 116, 118
Sinnett, A. P., on Spheres, 235
Smith, H. Arthur, Presidential Address to S.P.R., 134-5
Society for Psychical Research, 7, 47, 70-93, 96, 101, 116-17, 184, 186
Spheres, 229-38
Spirit drawings, 49
Spirit photography, 107-8
" Spirit Teachings," 69, 239
Spiritualism and Early Christianity, 176
Spiritualism as Religion, 143-79, 211, 249, 260
Spiritualism causing lunacy, 201
Spiritualism's high moral teaching, 195
Spiritualist meeting reported, 147-66
Spiritualists and psychical researchers, Difference between, 127, 131, 248
Spiritualists' National Union, 145, 172
Stead, W. T., 239-41
Stilling, Jung-, 21, 31
Strand Magazine, 184
Subliminal Memory, 16, 128-9-30-31, 223, 248
" Summerland," 233
Sunday Schools (Spiritualist), 167-170
Swedenborg, 17-29, 245

T

Talmud, 230
Taoists, 13
Telepathy, 93, 124, 131, 133, 187, 248
Teraphim, 14
Theosophy, 10, 121, 234
Thomas, St., wanting evidence, 210
Thompson, Mrs., 82-5
Trance, 131, 174
Transmissive function of brain, 181-2
Trinity, Doctrine of the, 195, 257
Triviality of Communications, 204
Tuttle, Hudson, on after-death spheres, 36-8, 233
Two Worlds, 145, 171-2, 178, 202
Tylor, E. B., 30
Tyndall on spiritualism, 183
Tyrrell, Tom, 147

U

Unseen life interpenetrating matter, 237
Ursuline nuns, 15

V

Van Eeden, Dr. F., sitting with Mrs. Thompson, 83
Varley, Cromwell, 54
Vaughan, Father Bernard, 73, 151, 195
Verrall, Mrs., 83-6.
Vibrations, 237
Virgilian Spiritualism, 10, 12
" Vishnu Purana," 235
Voice, Direct, 106-7

W

Walker-Anderson case (apparition), 117
Wallace, Dr. A. R., 51, 63
Wallis, E. W., 8
Warner, Miss, 77
Wesley haunt, 94-5, 116, 247
Wesleyanism, 176
Wilkinson (medium), 122-4, 131
Willett, Mrs., 88
Wilson, Dr., on Spheres, 234
World-soul, 212, 254
Wreidt, Mrs. (direct voice), 106-7, 248

Y

Yorkshire Observer, 179

Z

Zoroaster, 258

Printed by Cassell & Company, Limited, La Belle Sauvage, London, E.C.4
F 25.1018

CANISIUS COLLEGE LIBRARY
3 5084 00290 2560

BF 1261 .H6 1918
Hill, John Arthur, 1872-
Spiritualism

DATE DUE

APR 13 2013			

HIGHSMITH #45230

Printed In USA

CANISIUS COLLEGE LIBRARY
BUFFALO, N.Y.

Rf
Jun/50